

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

CHURCHGOERS attend the first of the nine-day dawn Masses on Sunday at the St. Joseph Church, site of the famous Bamboo Organ, in Las Piñas City.

RYAN LIM

GMA thwarts Jalosjos



JALOSJOS: Rapist's case still under DOJ review.

Gonzalez: Rapist may be released only in '09

By Christine O. Avendaño and DJ Yap in Manila, Bert Laput and Richel Umel Inquirer Mindanao

JUST AFTER MIDNIGHT Saturday, bursts of fireworks exploded over Dapitan City in Zamboanga del Norte on news that one of its sons—Prisoner N98P-0748—was finally coming home.

Some 2,000 city residents gathered to hear a thanksgiving Mass or watch the fireworks display as news of the impending return of convicted child-rapist, former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, spread through the city.

But it was a short-lived celebration. Saying President Macapagal-Arroyo was "upset" at the news, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday ordered officials of the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City to keep the former lawmaker—convicted in 1997 of raping an 11-year-old girl and sentenced to two life terms—in jail.

NO RIGGING/A9

GMA THWARTS/A4

No rigging, says Transco bid winner

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MONTE ORO GRID RESOURCES yesterday said its successful \$3.9-billion bid for the power grids of National Transmission Corp. (Transco) was fair and competitive, dismissing criticism that last week's auction was rigged to favor an influential ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Walter Brown, Monte Oro chair and president, said the main target of the conflict of interest criticism, businessman Enrique Razon, had kept his distance from

Top fashion designer found dead

By Nina Catherine Calleja and Marlon Ramos Inquirer Southern Luzon

PAGSANJAN, LAGUNA—ACclaimed fashion designer Ernest Santiago, who was found dead in his house here yesterday, may have been murdered by robbers, police said.

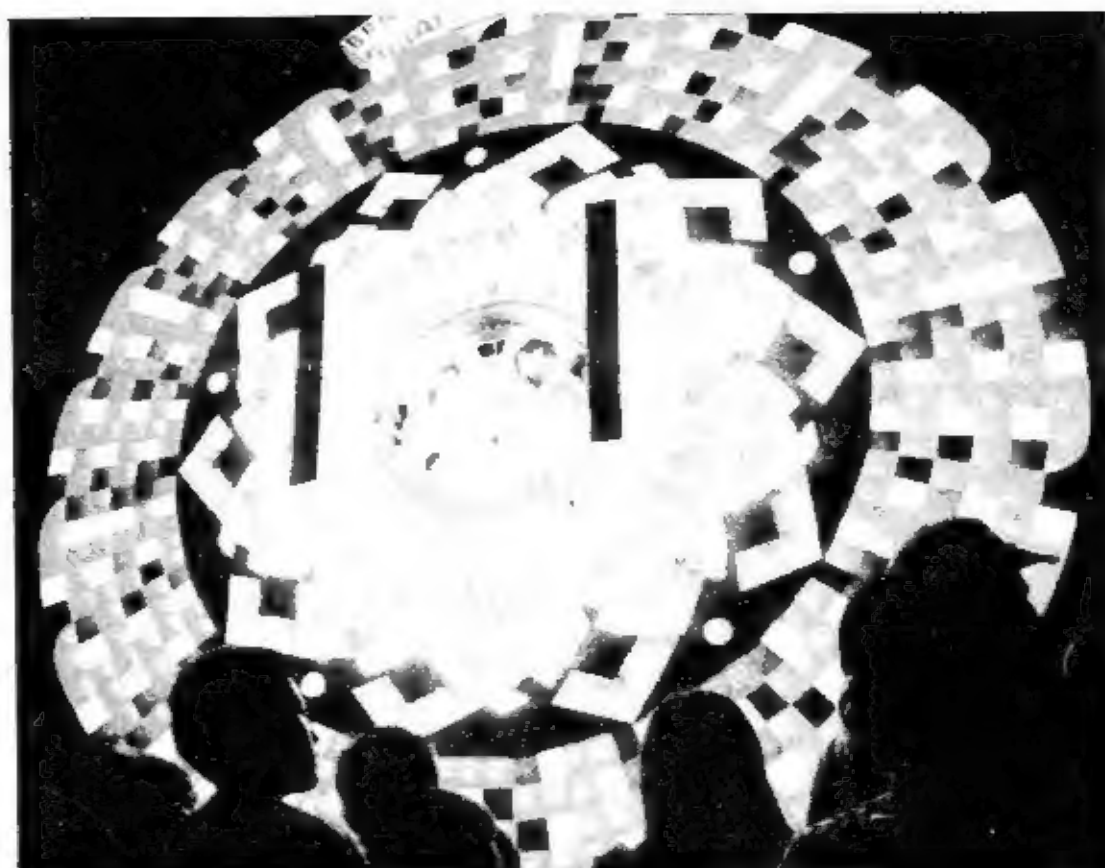
Santiago, 72, was found dead in his bed at around 9 a.m. by some of his employees at the 83 Gallery Café, a restaurant he owned near his house on Rizal Street in Barangay Poblacion II.

PO3 Benjamin Tapeño of the local police office said the victim

TOP FASHION/A4



ERNEST Santiago is best remembered by people as the maverick behind Coco Banana, iconic club of the 1970s and 1980s. FILE PHOTO



AGLITTER, AGLOW. Spectators watch a giant lantern's play with lights during the Christmas Lantern Festival in the City of San Fernando in Pampanga.

REUTERS

Giant lanterns go 'dancing'

By Tonette Orejas Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Every year, Pampanga's giant Christmas lanterns light up the night sky and bring in the crowds.

During Saturday's *Ligligan Parul* (Lantern Festival), eight lanterns, each measuring 5.5 meters in diameter and fitted

with 3,000 to 6,000 bulbs, danced for the first time in 20 years to the music of a brass band, a tradition being revived in this Pampanga capital.

The folk element was resurrected, courtesy of the city government's Magsilbi Tamu (Let's Serve) Brass Band 919.

The 45-member ensemble played under the baton of Edwin Lumanog, performing a medley

of Christmas songs testing the sense of timing and rhythm of the lantern-makers and operators who showed off the designs and colors of their mammoth creations in the final round of the lantern competition.

Unlike in the early 1980s when the band played non-stop till morning, this time the band rendered a five-

GIANT/A6

Anti-Red law won't stop insurgents

By Amando Doronila

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO set the clock back 15 years when she endorsed on Dec. 13 a proposal by a Bicol congressman to revive the ante-

ANALYSIS

diluvian Anti-Subversion Law.

Enacted in 1957 and repealed in 1992, the measure, she said, would be used as a weapon to stop the "ideological nonsense" and "criminal acts once and for all," and end the 39-year Philippine communist insurgency, so the country could "move on."

Fifty years spanned 1957 and 2007, during which the communist system collapsed in the

ANTI-RED/A10

PDI story starts book donation

By Eliza Victoria Inquirer Research

IT ALL STARTED WITH AN INQUIRER news article.

In June last year, American executive William M. Johnson donated money to buy books for the Diit-Mercyville Community School in Tacloban City.

He had read about how the school's 33 Grade 4 students did

PDI STORY/A8

Ernest helped define RP's lifestyle landscape

By Thelma San Juan Contributor

ERNEST SANTIAGO, A LEADING fashion designer and landscape artist, lived alone in a beautiful Balinese-style home behind his café in Pagsanjan town in Laguna—a favorite destination of local and foreign tourists and the lifestyle crowd.

From the 1970s and even to this day, Ernest helped define the fashion, design and night life landscape of the Philippines. He was a lifestyle icon.

People remember him best as the maverick behind Coco Banana—the iconic club of the 1970s and 1980s immortalized

in the Hordog's Original Pilipino Music "Annie Banang-bakal."

He opened Coco Banana in the mid-1970s, turned it into the "in" place for Manila's bohemians, café society, fashionistas and socialites. Indeed, it defined the after-six freedom of the city populace in the peak years of martial rule.

From disco music to live theatrical performances to outrageous fashion, Coco Banana dictated Manila's night life for over a decade.

Also in the 1970s and early 1980s, Ernest helped set fashion trends with the innovative,

ERNEST/A4



Top shops locked in battle of bags

NEW YORK—A TEAM OF DESIGNERS at Saks Fifth Avenue envisioned "a piece of modern art" and hired a renowned graphic artist to create it.

Their counterparts at Lord & Taylor demanded five prototypes, even traveling to a Korean factory to oversee manufacturing.

TOP SHOPS/A6

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Eastern Mindanao will have mostly cloudy skies with scattered rains. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain-showers or thunderstorms.

Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Rosario	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laos	Partly Cloudy	Tarlac	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	San. Felipe	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Laguna	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY RHEA BLANCA, FOR RESEARCH/12/17/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

Second FRONT PAGE

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17 1

(In exact order)

Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

2 25 29 31 42 48

P22,926,776.40

MILF calls off peace talks

Dispute over implementation snags negotiations with gov't in KL

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **207 OF 236** congressmen back English as instruction medium

/A12

■ **LUCIO TAN:** One Marcos crony who flourished

/A17

By Jeffrey Maltem
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—THE SCHEDULED EXPLORATORY talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on Saturday did not push through after the MILF backed out of the meeting due to a dispute over a draft agreement on territorial boundaries.

The MILF rejected the inclusion by government negotiators of the phrase "constitutional process" in the proposed draft Memorandum of Agreement on ancestral domain as the mode for implementation of the agreement.

"They wanted the same constitutional process with the Moro National Liberation Front as the mode for the implementation. That's their position and we cannot accept it. We have yet to see the document," Eid Kabalu, MILF's civil-military affairs chief, told the

INQUIRER by phone.

According to Kabalu, the MILF had informed the Malaysian facilitator that the draft of the government was unacceptable and, thus, resumption of the talks would not serve any purpose.

"There have been differences in the proposed text on concepts of territory and resources, including elements of governance," chief government negotiator Rodolfo Garcia told The Associated Press.

"Realistically given this present situation, it might be diffi-

cult to reach the (January) target. We are going to review the proposal that we have brought here and hope to be able to resolve the differences," he said.

Both sides hoped to get an agreement done in January on the "ancestral domain" agenda after years of wrangling.

Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, confirmed that the meeting in Kuala Lumpur "did not push through" in a text message to the INQUIRER.

"President Arroyo is determined to pursue a comprehensive settlement with the MILF hence today's difficulties are surmountable," Dureza said in a statement.

Dureza said he would await the full report of the Philippine panel on what happened.

"For the moment, I am more aware that more discussions in the Cabinet will have to take place considering that some points in

the government position have constitutional implications that need to be clarified to ensure successful implementation of agreements reached," Dureza said.

Under the Constitution, the exploration, utilization and development of natural resources shall be "under the full control" of the state.

"The MILF was disappointed with the draft because they accused the Philippine government of reneging on what had been agreed upon earlier," Othman Abdul Razak, the chief Malaysian government facilitator, told the AP.

"The meeting has to be called off because the MILF has refused to meet with the government panel," he said.

It is up to the government to improve the draft and make it acceptable

to the MILF, he said.

Government and MILF negotiators were supposed to finalize the agreement on the territorial composition of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE), the MILF's proposed homeland.

"Totally nothing happened yesterday. We have no idea what comes next, unless they could come up with compromise agreement today. We are optimistic. The ball is in the hands of government. We are ready always as long as they will not insist the Constitution in the talks," Kabalu said. **AP, AFP**

Top Abu, Janjalani's kin, killed

GOVERNMENT TROOPS KILLED A SENIOR Islamic militant wanted by the United States after they raided his safe house on a remote island in Mindanao, officials said on Sunday.

Abdumubin Sakandal was killed when he engaged in a gunfight with a Navy and Marine contingent that attempted to capture him late Saturday in Bongao, Tawi Tawi, Philippine Navy spokesperson Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan said.

"He was to be apprehended but he put up a fight," Caculitan said.

The US had offered \$20,000 for the arrest of Sakandal, a brother-in-law of Abu Sayyaf chief Khadaffy Janjalani who was killed in a clash with the military on nearby Jolo island in September last year. The Philippine government had placed a separate P2 million bounty on his head.

Sakandal, also known as Mobin Abdurajak, a leader of the Abu Sayyaf group, was wanted for kidnapping 21 people, including Western tourists, from the Malaysian resort island of Sipadan in 2000. The victims were freed after a ransom was paid.

"The neutralization of Abdurajak is part of our campaign to eliminate the Abu Sayyaf terrorists," regional Navy chief Rear Admiral Emilio Marayag said. **Nikko Dizon, Reuters, AFP and AP**

Sumilao tillers see hope in GMA invitation

By TJ Burgonio

THE BUKIDNON FARMERS SCHEDULED to meet with President Macapagal-Arroyo today are optimistic the invitation is a "good sign" she would rule favorably on their bid to reclaim a 144-hectare property in Sumilao from a giant food firm.

The 55 farmers, members of the indigenous Higaonon tribe, will march from their encampment outside the Department of Agrarian Reform office in Quezon City to Malacangang for the 11 a.m. dialogue with the President.

Later, the President will host lunch for 20 to 25 of the farmers' representatives and three or four Catholic bishops whom she agreed to meet with, Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde said yesterday.

"That's a good sign for us. We see this dialogue as an opportunity for her to prove that she supports agrarian reform. We expect her to issue a favorable decision," said Napoleon Merida Jr., 24, head of the San Vicente Landless Farmers Association that represents the second-generation farmers who are staking their claim to the former Quisumbing estate that was sold to San Miguel Foods Inc. (SMFI).

The land was granted to the farmers in 1995 but the government took it back in 1996 when it approved the conversion of the estate into an agro-industrial park. This was upheld by the Supreme Court in 1999.

The farmers, who walked 1,700 km from Sumilao to Manila for nearly two months to dramatize their demand, first went to Malacangang on Dec. 7 but no one came out to meet them. The President announced she would see them only last Friday. **With a report from Christine O. Avendaño**

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10 kg. Wall Mounted Dryer
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0% Interest P16,998.67-3mos. P8,499.33-6mos.

SAVINGS P2,000

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Once the acne has been eliminated, the second step of erasing acne scars follows. Through the **Diamond Peel**, acne scars and other blemishes can be successfully removed. With the use of a diamond dust-coated wand, the skin is exfoliated by the combined action of diamond chips and the cleaning action of a vacuum. As a result, the dead cells in the topmost layer of the skin are removed, leaving a clearer new layer that is smoother and even. Unlike other skin peeling methods, the Diamond Peel

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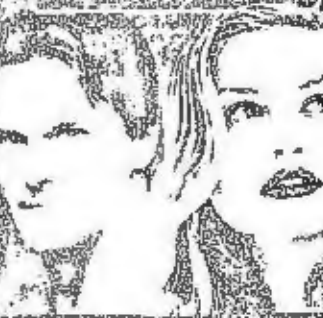
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Going, going, gone – from HK rich to RP poor

By Philip C. Tubeza
Correspondent

FROM HK\$10,000 BIRTHDAY cards to cruises to Antarctica.

These were some of the items offered in a benefit auction that helped a Hong Kong charity raise nearly P30 million in just one night for slum dwellers in the Philippines.

The well-dressed crowd that bid for the items, members and supporters of International Care Ministries (ICM) who gathered at the JW Marriott Hotel on Nov. 15, raised HK\$5.1 million (P28 million) for the very poor living in the slums of Negros, Bohol and General Santos City.

"Your generosity will have a real, meaningful impact on the lives of more than 100,000 people. Your generosity has been wonderful and we really appreciate that," said David Sutherland, ICM chair and a managing director at Morgan Stanley.

More than 500 people, including Hong Kong business leaders and expatriates, packed the Marriott ballroom for the banquet, which a private benefactor had generously sponsored. Nevertheless, attendees donated \$15,000 per table (or \$1,500 per plate).

The guests included ICM partner organizations in the Philippines like the Centre for Community Transformation and Gawad Kalinga, and local government leaders like Mayor Dan Lim of Tagbilaran, Bohol, where ICM has a feeding program.

Change thousands of lives

"Remember, this is going to change the lives of thousands of people. I mean not all of you can trip down to Bacolod or Dumaguete and see what I've seen there," said Ranjan Marwah, one of Hong Kong's top corporate headhunters and the auctioneer for the night.

ICM, a Christian charity, began working in the Philippines in 1992 and has grown enough to provide last year 300,000 kilos of rice and 2.2 million doses of medicine.

"We now target communities where the average income of recipients is less than HK\$350 (P1,960) a month. Most of the families we work with are significantly poorer than that," Sutherland said.

ICM works with Christian churches based in the slums to identify the families that need help.

"We invite the pastors of all these different communities for a multi-day training program. We teach them to care for their people in their communities," Sutherland said.

"And then we ask each of them to train half a dozen people in their communities in the same program. Once we have six to eight trained, then we can start a program there," he said.

Thankful patient

One of those who flew in from the Philippines for the banquet was Fredalyn Pabuaya who had suffered from a distended stomach and was helped by ICM. Pabuaya sang the song "Thankful" for the audience.

"Look, we should provide because we can, we are out in Hong Kong, eating in a fine hotel, in a fine restaurant. So please, one more time, is there anyone in this room who hasn't had a chance to either bid or get one of those papers, please raise your hand before the opportunity passes you by," said Marwah, as he urged donations of HK\$25,000 for the special medical cases fund.

The items on the auction block, which were all donated, included trips to the El Nido and Amanpulo resorts in the Philippines, a cruise to Antarctica, a vacation in a villa in the South of France, front row seats at the French Open, a chance to play on Wimbledon's tennis courts, and skiing in the exclusive Telluride, Colorado, ski village where actor Sylvester Stallone was famously barred from buying a home by the residents.

Also auctioned off were a HK\$150,000 gold and diamond Batheley watch and paintings by Filipino artists Dominic Rubio, Federico Aguilar Alcuaz and Carlo Magno.

"Look people, this is the greatest place on the planet!" cried a

woman pastor as the vacation trip to El Nido in Palawan was being bid out. It eventually fetched HK\$95,000 (P522,000).

Besides luxury items and vacations, ICM also bid out HK\$10,000 (P55,000) birthday cards.

"Here's the deal," Sutherland said. "If you want a birthday present, what do you do? If you spend HK\$10,000, you will feed 125 people. And those 125 people will send you a birthday card on your birthday."

"And [for] HK\$50,000, 625 people [will be fed] and when your birthday comes around, in your mail will arrive a DVD with your 600 people singing happy birthday for you," he said.

The money raised at the auction will be used to feed about 15,000 people every week, provide about three million doses of medicine to more than 75,000 patients, and provide free pre-schooling to more than 1,000 children.

In all, the auction raised just over HK\$5 million, which Sutherland said was about half of ICM's operating budget for 2007-2008.

"At ICM, we are all very, very grateful for the generosity of our Hong Kong donors," he said.

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No rigging, says Transco bid winner

From page A1

the bidding conducted by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM).

Brown said Razon, head of port operator International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) and treasurer of the administration Team Unity during the May senatorial elections, would immediately divest his less than 2-percent interest in the consortium.

Opposition senators said Jose Ibazeta, president of PSALM, was concurrently director of ICTSI and its subsidiaries and that his participation in the largest privatization of government assets in history was irregular.

Ms Arroyo's brother, Diosdado Macapagal Jr., has also been linked to Monte Oro.

Sen. Jambay Madrigal has vowed to go to the Supreme Court to nullify Tuesday's auction and block Monte Oro's bid to secure a franchise from Congress to operate the Transco assets. Monte Oro is required to get the license within one year. Otherwise, operation of the Transco assets will revert to the government.

Brown pointed out that four different groups had been prequalified to join the auction after they had complied with PSALM requirements.

Two bidders backed out at the last minute. Industry sources earlier said pressure was brought to bear on the two groups that withdrew even though one was prepared to make an offer as high as \$4.2 billion.

Complex evaluation

"The evaluation process is complex and involves many people at many layers—from the lowest-level professional staff to the PSALM board. To manipulate the process either for or against a bidder will be extremely difficult and almost impossible for Mr. Ibazeta. If you are aware of the bidding rules, Ibazeta had no discretion in determining whether one could qualify or not," Brown said in a statement.

"You have to give credit to the professional men and women of PSALM. To insinuate otherwise is unfair to these people."

Razon owns, through his Surestre properties, 4.9 percent of Monte Oro Grid Resources, which has only a 30-percent share in the winning consortium (its major foreign partner is State Grid Corp. of China) which gives the port cargo king 1.49-percent indirect shareholdings, Brown explained.

"More importantly, Mr. Razon had no hand at all in the bidding and valuation process within the group. We had a very professional group that evaluated the bid and that came up with the winning strategy. Mr. Razon has issued a statement that he will divest from Monte Oro," he said.

Narrow results

Brown explained that the narrow gap between bid offers—\$3.9 billion by Monte Oro and \$3.905 by the San Miguel Corp. consortium led by Ramon Ang—showed that both groups were looking at the same corporate data and market expectations for Transco in the next 25 years.

"Based on our evaluation, because we believe we can bring in value to Transco, we estimated the efficiencies we gain in the next 25 years. This will come from improvements in system efficiency where we expect lower numbers of tripping per year, faster response to disasters, more looped networks, and state-of-the-art systems," he said.

"Given the very high regulatory risk we believe no responsible bidder will go far from the RAB (regulated asset base). Knowing our worthy competitor San Miguel as being a responsible company to its shareholders, we expected them to have also realized this regulatory risk and not, as can be seen, bid far beyond the RAB," Brown said.

Potential broadband network

He said that the Monte Oro offer included the potential of using Transco's fiber optic cables embedded in the transmission lines as a backbone for a national broadband network.

"We expected Two Rivers of Metro Pacific (which runs PLDT and Smart) to bid. We estimated the value to 'light up' the dark fibers. Then we looked at the number of 'drop-off' stations in the network," Brown said.

"We then estimated the Internet penetration (IP) of the Philippines. We then estimated that we will be able to capture a significant fraction of the IP business in the Philippines in the coming years. Given our huge population, we believe we can do this even without getting from the existing customers. Based on these general assumptions, we estimated the value of the IP business."

Brown refused to be drawn into a word war with a disgruntled bidder, the La Costa group of former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo and nickel miner Salvador Zamora II.

La Costa is seeking a writ of injunction from a Makati court to stop the privatization, alleging violation of the anti-graft law. It says it was disqualified by Ibazeta from the bidding because it was willing to offer \$6 billion for Transco as it gave a higher value for its broadband potential.

Brown said the La Costa offer was based on "hypothetical" figures.

"Given the conditions of the bid and the particular provisions of the Concession Agreement, our shareholders and funders could not and should not take unnecessary financial risk by bidding way beyond our bidding price," he said.

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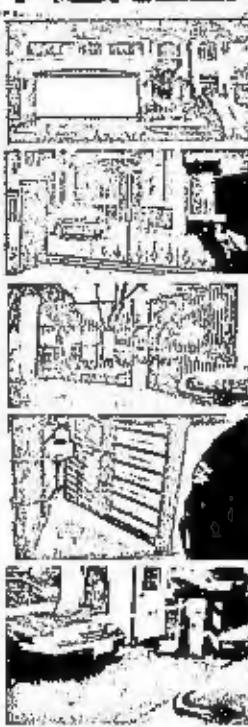
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Dare to ask. Be an Inquirer.

The 1957 Anti-Subversion Law has failed to crush the homegrown rebel movement, and a modern and democratic Philippine government has run out of weapons to end the world's longest-running communist insurgency.

The proposed revival of this law would reverse 15 years of the trend set by Republic Act No. 7636, which repealed RA 1700 (the Anti-Subversion Law), opening the political system to participation by commu-

When President Fidel Ramos signed RA

"Today, we repeal (RA 1700) confident of our national stability, and confirmed in the resilience of our democracy. By assuring communists insurgents of policy space we also challenge them to compete under our constitutional system and free market ideas, which are guaranteed in them under the rule of law."

Revival of failed approach

The revival of RA 1700 is not only a throwback to the political orientation of a repressive response to the insurgency but also to a failed approach.

A freer hand

Esperon seems to suggest that with the repeal of RA 7636, the security forces will have a freer hand in killing suspected insurgents and crushing their rebellion in two years mainly by military action, unaccompanied by reforms in governance.

"If we are to become a First World country, we have to put a stop to their ideological nonsense and their criminal acts once and for all. It's either we get rid of them now, or we get rid of them later. Whatever happens, they must be stopped."

This message can only be read by the anticommunist hardliners in the security forces as either an order of battle, a license to kill, or the launching of a new round of death squad killings of political activists.

Alston report

The final report of Philip Alston, human rights rapporteur of the United Nations, has said two policy initiatives are of special importance to understanding why the killings continue.

First, the military's counterinsurgency strategy "increasingly focuses on dismantling civil society organizations that are purported to be CPP front groups." Second, the criminal justice system has failed to arrest and convict people behind the extrajudicial executions.

"This is partly due to a distortion of priorities that has law enforcement officials focused on prosecuting civil society leaders rather than their killers," said the Alston report.

This is the mind-set from which spring the new initiatives to revive the Anti-Subversion Law and throw back the country to the black era of anticommunist repression half a century ago. It has a large constituency in the security forces.

of Philip Alston, human rights expert of the United Nations, has been to identify alternatives are of special interest. "Understanding why the killing was necessary is the army's counterinsurgency strategy," he says. "It focuses on dismantling organizations that support the P front groups." Second, the military system has failed to take into account the people behind the extra-judicial killings. "There is a distortion of priorities," he says. "Law enforcement officials are not taking civil society leaders into account. They are killing civil society leaders," said the Alston report.

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207 of 236 solons back English as medium of instruction



A BILL SEEKING TO reinstate English as the medium of instruction in Philippine schools is gathering steam at the House of Representatives.

The so-called "English Bill" of Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas has attracted 206 coauthors, a number its principal proponent said all but assured its passage. There are 236 congressmen.

As House Bill No. 305, it seeks to supersede the government's existing "bilingual" policy, which allows the use of English and Filipino as the mediums of instruction.

The bill instead assigns English as the sole medium from Grade 3 to fourth year high school, while keeping the current language policy for college students.

Under the measure, schools will be given the option of using English, Filipino or a regional language to teach subjects from preschool to Grade 2.

It also prescribes the teaching of English and Filipino as separate subjects throughout elementary and high school, while seeking to "enliven" English as the "language of interaction in schools." *Christian V. Esguerra*

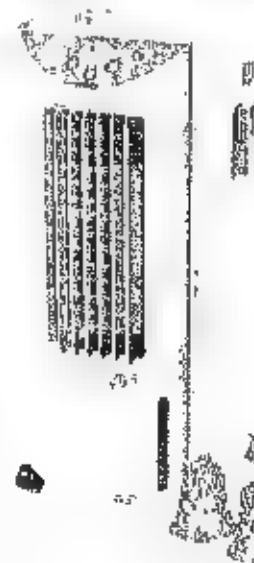
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GMA seen extending Esperon's term

By Gil Cabacungan Jr. and Nikko Dizon

OPPOSITION SENATORS YESTERDAY SAID they were wary of a reported plan by President Macapagal-Arroyo to extend the term of Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr.

Esperon is scheduled to end his term on Feb. 9 next year, when he reaches the military's mandatory retirement age of 56.

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said an extension had never been discussed in national security cluster meetings, but admitted that he had heard rumors about it.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson said he too had heard talk of the President's plan to extend Esperon's term but he did not know for how long. "I won't oppose it. I will let her destabilize herself," said Lacson in a text message to the INQUIRER.

Esperon, former Army chief before he was named chief of staff in July 2006, reportedly played a pivotal role in crushing an attempted coup led by Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim in February last year, and again last Nov. 29.

He has also expressed support for a controversial move to revive the Anti-Subversion Law, repealed after the martial law years, as a means to stamp out the decades-old insurgency problem.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said the President might just want to give Esperon an extra few months for "security purposes."

But Pimentel said he was more concerned about Esperon's "golden parachute" once he steps down as the most powerful military man in the country.

"I don't think he will fade into oblivion without a whimper. It's his golden parachute that is more disturbing. He'll surely land a good paying job so that the President can secure him and keep him on a leash while in pasture," said Pimentel, noting the President's penchant for rewarding loyal military officers with high-paying government posts when they retire.

Esperon was one of the generals mentioned in the "Hello Garci" tapes that alleged cheating by Ms. Arroyo in the 2004 elections.

Reacting to the rumors circulating in military circles and through text messages of the extension of his term, Esperon sounded piqued.

"Grabe (That's too much)," said Esperon in a phone interview.

"Like I said before, I will be honored if my term will be extended but there are a lot of other officers who are capable of taking over," he said.

Esperon seemed particularly irked by talk that his wife was being cited as the source of the rumors of his extension. *With Christine O. Avendaño*

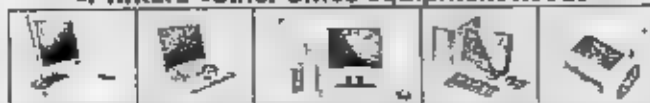
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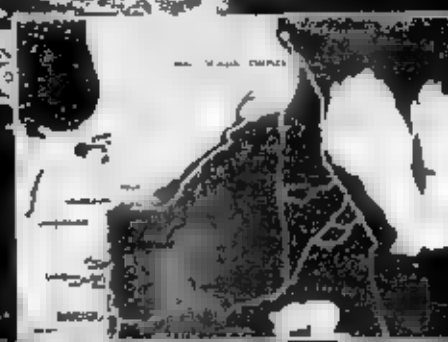
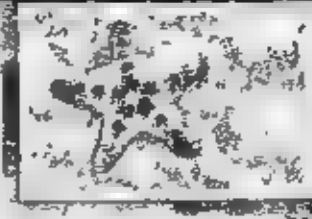
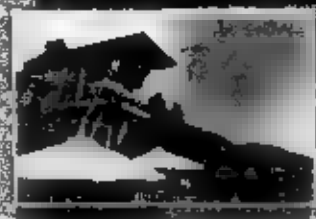
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OPINION



'VIP' convoys' arrogant drivers

I READ WITH INTEREST THE STORY about the police officer who fired at the vehicle of former Gov. Josepina "Josie" dela Cruz and mauled the driver. Without a doubt, this reckless cop should be punished with the full force of the law. He deserves not only to lose his job but also to serve time in jail for his criminal act.

But as I continued reading the story, this portion caught my attention: "Eduardo Magsakay, the driver of the Nissan Safari which served as a backup vehicle to Dela Cruz's vehicle, told the police that Jethro Lim, who was driving a Toyota Corolla, tried to get ahead of the convoy. Magsakay said he tried to stop Lim from overtaking the convoy—a standard security measure for VIPs—by driving close to the Corolla and nearly sideswiping it, a move, he admitted, that could have ended the policeman."

Last I checked, roads were public property, with every licensed driver having equal right to them. What is it that gives government officials the idea that they, more

than others, should be given the privilege of enjoying a larger space of the road?

Last Nov. 5, I was nearly sideswiped by a Toyota Revo with license plate XPP 259 on Commonwealth Avenue. The Revo was being escorted by a policeman on a motorcycle but was moving quite slowly, so I tried to overtake it on its left side. Just as I was drawing even, the driver suddenly swerved left and almost hit the passenger side of my car where my wife was seated. I instinctively blasted my horn, and the Revo responded by sounding a siren (which, I understand, is illegal in non-emergency vehicles). Since when has it been illegal to overtake a "VIP" convoy?

I can understand the need to take security measures should an unknown vehicle try to cut into a convoy, but what's wrong with simply overtaking it? Dela Cruz's driver apparently felt that he had the right to prevent Lim's car from overtaking. Why? Did he perceive Lim's maneuver as threatening? Or was his act simply a manifesta-

tion of the illusion of self-importance a lackey often harbors as a result of his being attached to an influential figure? How many Filipino drivers have been victimized by siren-blasting vehicles of senators, congressmen, mayors, etc.? Aren't these convoys illegal in the first place? Why are the powers-that-be doing nothing as the law is being broken in such a visible and noisy manner? There are few proofs better than this that show that the rich and powerful in the Philippines are exempt from following the law.

Lim's act was inexcusable, and he should definitely be punished. But the authorities should not stop there; they should also look into what may have triggered that act. There are few drivers on the road more arrogant or more reckless than those leading "VIP" convoys. How much longer must the ordinary Filipino driver put up with them?

—GERRY LOS BAÑOS,
University of the
Philippines Press,
UP Diliman, Quezon City

Teachers cheat by not teaching

COMMENT ON THE LETTER TITLED "Teaching sideline." (INQUIRER, 11/29/07) It's a shame for a professor to sell raffle tickets that are no longer valid, but it is a lot more frustrating to see a professor who does not teach in class. We students expect professors to teach us the subject for which we enrolled. And we expect to learn from them. But I have had a very arrogant professor who did not teach us. All he would tell us was his personal life. It was so frustrating that after the semester all we learned from him was just about his adventures abroad and his family.

I also have a professor who just asks us to sing and does not even deal with the subject that we are studying. And the subject is very important to our field of specialty. Imagine how much of our parents' money and our time this kind of professors are wasting.

Education is a right and professors should not play with it. A student is punished for cheating. I believe that a teacher should also be punished for not teaching.

—GERALD R. MESINA,
geirou@yahoo.com

Bichara hits envoy's 'squid tactics'

THIS REFERS TO THE LETTER OF Mariano A. Dumia, the incumbent chargé d'affaires of our embassy in Lebanon. (INQUIRER 12/11/07)

Instead of answering squarely the issues raised against him, Dumia resorted to character assassination by innuendo and hearsay. Instead of justifying his actions, he let loose a barrage of unfounded, baseless and malicious accusations against my person.

1. I do not have any personal animosity against him. I do not know him personally, neither have I met him in person. I made my privilege speech because of the numerous written complaints sent to me by overseas Filipino workers in Lebanon. As a former ambassador to Lebanon and now a member of Congress, I can't just close my eyes to the plight of OFWs, more so after I learned they were being harassed by Dumia.

2. Dumia alleged, without any basis, that the sources of my speech were three embassy personnel, one of whom worked under me. This betrays Dumia's paranoia and explains his witch-hunting tactics against his immediate staff and our OFWs in Lebanon. With his present mental state, it is not surprising that he enlisted the Internal Security Force of Lebanon to investigate his very own subordinates. In fact, he admitted that intelligence authorities of Lebanon attempted to investigate our own country's vice consul and his sister, not only once, but thrice.

3. Dumia wrote about responsibility and fairness. Yet, he accused me of owning a car which, according to him, is not even registered

under my name. Worse, there is nothing, except hearsay and conjecture, to back his allegation that I own the car. He also claimed, without having met me, to know my state of mind, accusing me of being "very angry" with him.

4. Dumia accused me of paying \$10,928 for a distressed OFW way back in March 2006 and tried to mislead the public about the circumstances of this OFW who was suffering from severe mental illness. Prior to my assumption as ambassador, the embassy tried several times to repatriate her but she always violently and hysterically refused to board a plane. It came to a point that no airline would take her as a passenger. So the embassy had to look for an airline that would board her.

As it was, the airline which took her required that she be restrained on a stretcher. The airline removed at least four seats of the airplane to accommodate her. She was also accompanied by one embassy personnel to Manila. The cost of \$10,928 covered not only the travel tickets but also the hospitalization expense for the OFW. The tedious process of repatriating the OFW, including the expenses incurred when I was not yet the ambassador, has been properly documented but Dumia conveniently chose not to mention this.

Finally, I am saddened that our country's representative to Lebanon has to employ squid tactics just to divert public attention from the real issues raised by OFWs against him.

—RER AL FRANCIS C. BICHARA,
Second District, Albay

GSIS: Gracia missed Garcia's gains

IN WHAT SEEMED TO BE FLEETING acclaim for columnist Solita Monsod, Rowena Therese Gracia acknowledged her longstanding crusade against GSIS president and general manager Winston E. Garcia ("Monsod's return hailed," INQUIRER, 12/12/07).

Gracia praised the columnist for what she perceived as a complementing "support" to her crusade, calling it "fearless journalism," only to insinuate later that Monsod's effort dwindled with her subsequent "silence." But Gracia failed to recognize that Monsod worked and went out of her way to help the GSIS address some members' concerns coursed through her office.

Gracia, as she herself admitted, is a dismissed GSIS employee. Her dismissal from public service was ordered not because she ex-

pressed her grievances against Garcia and his policies. It was based on the cases filed against her for her penchant to put her personal needs, in the guise of her right to free speech, before her responsibility to deliver genuine public service.

It is just unfortunate that Gracia was unable to stay a little longer at the GSIS to see for herself the successes the institution has so far reaped following Garcia's reforms. She missed the unparalleled financial growth and stability the pension fund enjoys today under the leadership of the very person she sought to oust.

—ELLA E. VALENCERINA,
vice president,
Public Affairs Office,
Government Service
Insurance System

Pork barrel is public money

"DBM JUNKED P100-M PORK FOR Trillanes." (INQUIRER, 12/12/07) I believe Malacañang is wrong in not releasing Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV's pork barrel. The Palace should be reminded that the pork barrel is not a private resource to be disposed of as its officials wish.

The pork barrel comes from the taxpayers and is meant to benefit the whole Filipino nation, regardless of religious belief, color, creed and political affiliation.

—BENJAMIN JALECO,
boboy916@yahoo.com

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Tan: Marcos crony who flourished

OF ALL THE CRONIES OF THE LATE DICTATOR Ferdinand Marcos, Chinese-born tycoon Lucio Tan stands out as one of the most durable—and for that reason remarkable.

In the two decades since Marcos fled into exile following the People Power revolt in 1986, Tan has expanded a formidable empire in tobacco, beer, aviation and banking.

This makes him different from many associated with the Marcos era, whose empires faded away while his flourished.

And this despite losing some of his shareholdings to the government following the collapse of the Marcos regime.



LUCIO TAN

Court battles

Despite allegations of being given favorable treatment by Marcos, Tan has managed to get back most of what he lost in court battles spanning nearly two decades.

The 71-year-old, who was born in China's Fujian province, savored his latest victory on Dec. 7 when the Supreme Court lifted the government's sequestration of Allied Bank, which Tan controls.

The court declared null and void an order by the Presidential Commission on Good Government for the sequestration of Tan's shares in Allied Bank, Fortune Tobacco Corp., Foremost Farms and Shareholdings Inc.

The PCGG is tasked with recovering the ill-gotten wealth of Marcos and his cronies.

Analysts and bank officials say the court's ruling paves the way for a merger between Allied Bank and another Tan-controlled bank, Philippine National Bank (PNB).

Merger

"The merger will probably happen next year," PNB president Omar Tyrone Mier told AFP although he would not give details or a date.

Tan set up Allied Bank in 1977 and, while he only owns 13 percent personally, most of the remaining shares are held by close allies. It has a market capitalization of P10 billion.

PNB, once a government bank and formerly the country's largest commercial bank, was set up 91 years ago and privatized in 1989.

Tan now owns 67 percent of the bank, with the remainder largely held by foreign fund managers.

It has a market capitalization of about P30 billion, Mier said.

The PCGG says it will file a motion for reconsideration of the Supreme Court decision, but Mier said it was a "long shot" the ruling would be reversed.

Fourth largest bank

"Even with a motion for reconsideration, the merger will still take place next year," Mier said.

"We will not give up Allied Bank," said PCGG Commissioner Narciso Nario, stressing his agency would not cease its efforts to gain control of the bank.

Even when PNB and Allied Bank are merged into one, it would still be only the fourth largest bank in the Philippines, but Mier said increasing its size is necessary.

"In the banking industry, size matters. It means you have more muscle to expand your portfolio, your branches; your borrowing limit goes higher," he said.

Less competitive

He added that smaller banks were considering merging because they were becoming less competitive.

PNB and Allied Bank bring different qualities to the merger, said James Lago, research chief of Westlink Global Equities Inc.

PNB has a recognizable brand name and extensive network and background with the millions of Filipinos working overseas who use the bank to remit billions of dollars to their families back home.

Extensive contacts

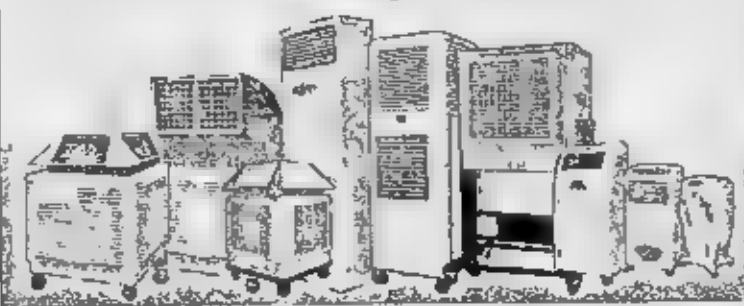
Allied Bank meanwhile has the accounts of Tan's companies as well as extensive contacts in the Chinese-Filipino business community, which is a major player in the country's retail, food processing and manufacturing sectors, said Lago.

But he warned that "the merger of different cultures of the two banks will take at least two years. There are two entrenched cultures there, especially at PNB."

With the heat on, some of the country's biggest banks are meanwhile considering new acquisitions to make themselves larger.

But as the wily Tan has demonstrated down the years, his durability is not in question. **AFP**

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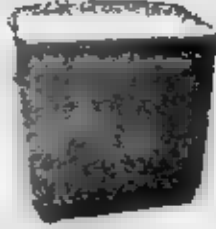
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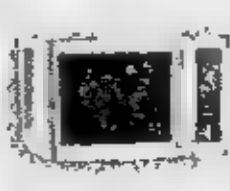
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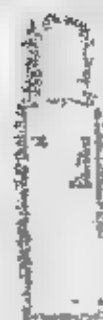
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**Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4157 Series of 2007

Garcia gains critics, denies favoring drug firms on meds bill

WITH ONLY THREE session days left before Congress adjourns for the holidays, pressure is mounting on Cebu

Rep. Pablo Garcia to step aside and allow the passage of a bill that promises lower medicine prices in the country.

Former Iloilo Rep. Rolex Suplico, author of the cheaper medicines bill in the 11th Congress, yesterday joined the

growing number of Garcia critics, accusing the 81-year-old lawmaker of lobbying in behalf of giant pharmaceutical

companies. "His antics to destroy the cheaper medicines bill are a clear sign that he has become a medical

representative of foreign multinational drug firms detailed at the lower house," Suplico, now Iloilo vice governor, said in

a text message. Sought for comment, Garcia yesterday said he was amenable to the passage of HB 2844,

provided certain provisions purportedly favoring drug firms were either removed or amended. "Maybe he doesn't

understand the law or the bill," he told the INQUIRER by phone, referring to Suplico. "How can I be accused of favoring multinational drug companies when I want to remove or amend provisions that would benefit them?"

Importation

Garcia said he objected to the provision requiring a presidential decree in an emergency as an all-around mechanism before the country could import foreign-made medicines.

He says the existing Intellectual Property Code allows either the government or an authorized third party to conduct "parallel importation" as a matter of "public interest."

Garcia said HB 2844 requires a patent holder's consent before anyone could import a drug on the basis of the patent, when the "importation process" is not covered by patent restrictions in the IPC.

"Now I ask, who's working for the interest of drug companies?" he said.

Last week, Majority Leader Arthur Defensor vowed no more "leniency" for Garcia, who had all but dominated plenary deliberations on HB 2844 for more than two weeks now. Christian V. Es-



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3 Marines killed in Palawan ambush

By Redempto Anda, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*
and Nikko Dixon in Manila

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—THREE PHILIPPINE Marines soldiers were killed in an early morning ambush launched by New People's Army rebels in Taytay town, northern Palawan, just hours after the government declared a unilateral ceasefire, took effect.

Western Command spokesman Lt. Col. Jacinto de Vera told newsmen the ambush occurred at 7:30 a.m. Sunday at Sitio Kauban, Barangay Binga. "The three soldiers were un-

armed in observance of the Somo (suspension of offensive military operations) and were in civilian clothes to do marketing duties for their detachment when they were treacherously attacked," Wescom Commander Ruperto Rico Borromeo said.

The fatalities were two privates and a private first class from the Marine Battalion Landing Team (MBLT) 9, according to Navy spokesperson Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan.

But the Western Command

declined to release the names of the victims pending notification of their next of kin.

Caculitan said the soldiers were new recruits, two of whom were 26 years old and another, 27 years old.

Malacañang had announced Thursday the Somo, which took effect nationwide Sunday.

"It's sad that the good gesture of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) in the cessation of military operations was un-

heeded by the communist rebels," Caculitan said in a phone interview.

He said the Somo was a unilateral decision on the part of the government "on the premise that everyone wants to enjoy the spirit of Christmas that we want to have a peaceful Christmas."

"As much as possible, we don't have massive operations," he said.

De Vera said about 20 armed men believed led by a certain Glenn dela Cruz (alias Glenn Silagan) were behind the ambush.

Caculitan said the soldiers were traveling on foot since the road from their detachment to the market was not accessible to vehicles.

"Troops usually leave their firearms behind when they go to markets to avoid attracting attention, especially of enemies,"

Military chief, Gen Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said last week that the Somo "excludes the termination of protective patrols in communities." With a report from Marlon Ramos, *Inquirer Southern Luzon*

NEWSBRIEFS

No Christmas solicitations

CEBU CITY—Police in Cebu province have been advised not to hold lavish Christmas parties or solicit and accept donations of lechon (roasted pig) especially from persons with shady backgrounds.

Senior Supt. Carmelo Valmorio, director of the Cebu Provincial Police Office, reminded police station chiefs in Cebu towns and cities of this policy as Christmas Day draws near.

Valmorio said it would be improper for the police to hold lavish celebrations since the Philippine National Police has no fund for such an expense.

He said soliciting lechon or donations of food and drinks especially from those linked to criminal activities is an absolute no-no. "I ordered them to keep it simple," Valmorio said.

Christmas gatherings at the police stations, he said, could be celebrated by exchanging gifts, serving simple fare and capped with a message from the police station chief.

He said he also reminded the police units in the province that liquor or beer should not be served during the Christmas parties nor should there be raffling off of door prizes.

Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas

Rape-slay probed

CITY OF CALAPAN—Police have formed Task Force Hazel after the body of a Joliboa crew member identified as Hazel Macagaling, 21, of Barangay Malaya in Naujan town was found raped and killed at about 6 a.m. on Dec. 10.

Supt. Marceño Romero, PNP assistant provincial director, said they formed the task force to solve the killing of the victim as there were still no witnesses to the crime.

Residents also reported hearing Macagaling shout for help right before midnight of Dec. 9 in Ramon Street, Barangay San Vicente Central of the city but they were afraid to assist in the open.

Madonna T. Virola, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Village officials slain

TUGUEGARAO CITY—A village council chief and a village watchman were shot and killed by two men on Wednesday in Barangay Fugu in Tuao town, police said.

Ronald Cedano, 43, Fugu village chief, and Joel Sauadan, 25, a barangay tanod, were in a village store when they were attacked.

Both suffered bullet wounds from an ArmaLite rifle, police said. Investigators were looking into whether personal grudge or love triangle was the motive of the killing.

Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

Son of ex-gov dies

CAJAYAN CITY—The eldest son of former Gov. Benjamin Dy Sr. and Cecilia La Madrid-Dy died on Dec. 11 after a heart attack in the family home here.

Benjamin Dy Jr., 35, a trader who ran but lost to Jose Panganiban Jr. for mayor in Agadanan town in the 2004 elections, complained of chest pains and later collapsed while in his father's house here. Relatives took him to the Ester Garcia Emergency Hospital, where he died.

He is the nephew of Isabela Rep. Faustino Dy and Cagayan City Mayor Caesar Dy and grandson of the late political patriarch, Faustino Dy Sr., and Natividad de Guzman-Dy. He is survived by his wife Bea and five children.

Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon

Quezon cop gunned down

LUCENA CITY—A policeman assigned to northern Quezon was gunned down by suspected New People's Army assassins while on his way home in Infanta town Dec. 14.

Infanta police chief Insp. Harold Cuesta said SPO2 Tomas Corpuz, assigned to the nearby General Nakar Municipal Police Office, was on his motorcycle when one of the suspects stopped him near his house in Barangay Dinahan.

Two other suspects immediately approached from behind and fired successive shots from handguns, fatally hitting the policeman in different parts of the body.

The policeman died on the spot, Cuesta said.

Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon

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Eye doctors deter scam on cataract surgeries

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE PHILIPPINE HEALTH Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) and the Philippine Academy of Ophthalmologists (PAO) have entered into an agreement to help deter spurious claims and unethical practices in cataract surgeries.

The memorandum of agreement, signed Dec. 9 by PhilHealth Acting President and Chief Executive Officer Lorna Fajardo and PAO President Dr. Domingo Padilla, provides for closer coordination between the PhilHealth and PAO concerning claims for cataract operations.

Under the agreement, PhilHealth will coordinate with PAO in the resolution of issues arising from claims for cataract surgery patients recruited through medical missions or other recruitment schemes. It will also provide support to PAO in the investigation or verification of claims for cataract surgeries.

PAO, which has 1,300 members and 10 regional chapters, has agreed to discipline its members with violations based on those referred by PhilHealth. It also agreed to coordinate with PhilHealth in the conduct of PAO-sponsored community-based cataract projects to properly identify claims for payment.

Last month, PhilHealth stopped the payment of claims for cataract surgery during medical missions and through recruitment schemes amid irregularities in claims of hospitals and doctors involving hundreds of millions of pesos.

Administrative cases

It has also filed administrative cases against doctors and three hospitals in Negros Occidental in relation to irregularities in insurance claims for cataract surgeries.

The doctors and hospitals are facing 34 counts of violations of Republic Act No. 7875 (National Health Insurance Act) before PhilHealth's prosecution department.

The alleged violations included the submission of padded claims, misrepresentation and violation of PhilHealth warranties of accreditation.

The violations are grounds for the non-renewal or revocation of accreditation of doctors and hospitals and the imposition of a fine from P10,000 to P50,000. Criminal charges for falsification of documents and estafa could also be filed against the respondents.

Padilla said, in a text message, that the signing of the agreement will give PAO "teeth to police our ranks."

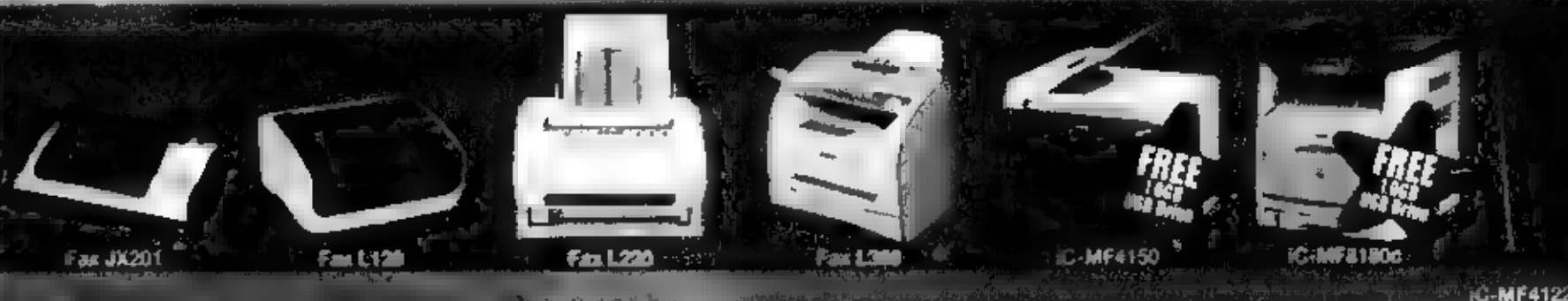
PAO has earlier decried the manner of getting patients by using recruiters-agents or "seekers" as unethical.

PhilHealth paid 19,145 cataract related claims reaching around P390 million to hospitals and doctors in Western Visayas from January 2004 to June 2007, according to data from PhilHealth's corporate planning department.

Last year, PhilHealth paid P48,491,030 in professional fees alone to 10 doctors in Western Visayas for eye-related operations.

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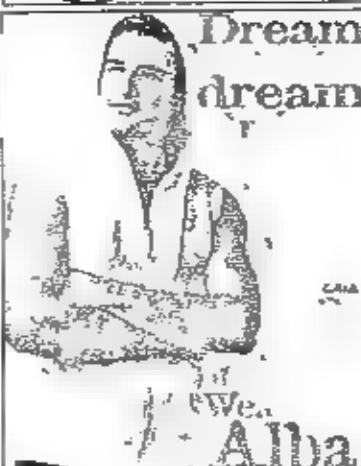
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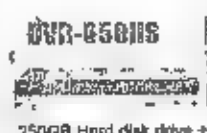
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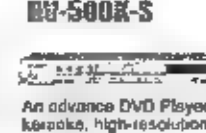
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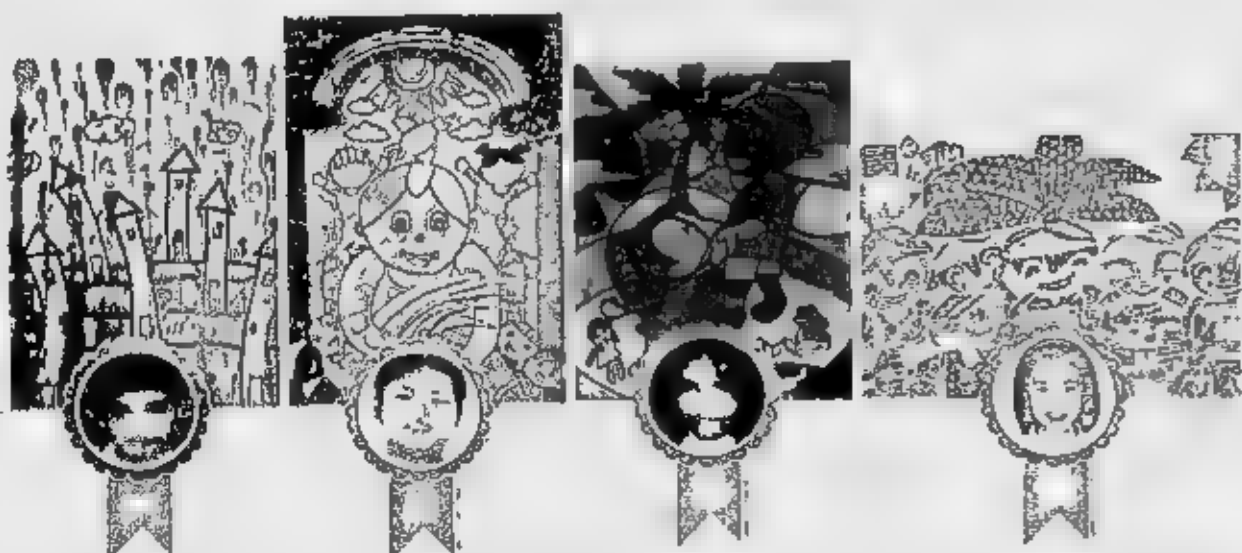


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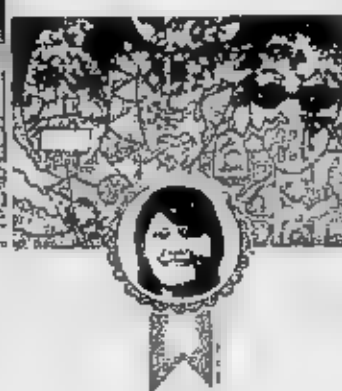
John Loyalty Y. De Guzman *SERVE To Us*
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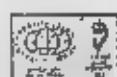
Runners-Up

Alfred Rae Calayutan *Mga Alayala Ng Bulay*
University of the East - Calocan

Ronald L. Jaramon *Si Ma'am*
University of the East - Calocan

Salvador M. Balarin, Jr. *Living Pampang, Gabay Sa Kinabukasan*
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For the Second Colors of Life Cocolife Students Visual Arts Competition, students from grade school, high school and college were asked to visualize **SERVE**: an acronym for Cocolife's core values: Sincerity, Empathy, Reliability, Vision, and Enthusiasm. With more than 500 entries all over the country, here are the best twelve



Board of Judges: Maurina Bundoc (Creative Director), Oviran Castrillo (Sculptor), Aba Delena (Sculptor), Eduardo Dayao (Creative Director), Nico Edward Kasanan (Art Director), Rico Lascano (Artist), Pablo Millan, Jr. (Art Director), Monna Nafagas (President, Gentau Philippines), Etno Nobieza (SVP, Cocolife), Nitz Roxas (Creative Director), Howell See (Art Director), Michael Velasco (Artist), Edwin Wilwayco (Artist), Joanne Zapanta-Andrade (Photographer/Columnist)

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Davao court dismisses case vs prof, daughter

DAVAO CITY—THE 7 YEAR-OLD LEGAL battle of Filipino environmental protection advocate and poison expert Dr. Romeo Quijano and his daughter, journalist Ilang-Ilang, against agricultural giant Lapanday Agricultural and Development Corp. (Ladeco) was finally ended by a court decision that trashed the P5 5 million worth of civil damages slapped against them by the company.

Judge Renato Fuentes of the regional trial court branch 11, in a decision dated Dec. 10, said the evidence laid down by the Ladeco against the Quijanos were not convincing enough to pin them down.

No malicious intent

In his decision, Fuentes said: "In the final analysis, the evidence of the company did not apparently show convincing proof the subject publication devoid of criminal prosecution for libel as already established, do not prove in a separate civil action filed, any malicious intent of defendants against the corporation, to produce an action for damages."

Ladeco filed a civil case against the Quijanos in 2002 following the dismissal of the libel case it also filed against them, with the publishers, editors and authors of the now defunct Philippine Post, for an article that exposed the alleged ill effects of the banana company's operation on the lives of the people in a small village in Digos, Davao del Sur, called Kamukhaan in 2000.

Relief, disgust

But while the decision appeared favorable to the Quijanos, the judge denied their petition for moral damages and instead ordered the company to pay P50,000 to cover the defendants' lawyer's fees.

The Quijanos said they spent more than P300,000 in legal costs. At the height of the trial, Quijano, who had to travel from Manila to Davao, branded the case as a form of corporate harassment against him and his daughter.

With the recent development, Quijano expressed both relief and disgust over what he said was a "parently malicious suit allowed to prosper and linger for several years."

Ladeco is owned by the Lorenzo family, including former Department of Agriculture secretary Cito Lorenzo, a close ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo. Jeffrey M. Tupas, Mindanao Bureau

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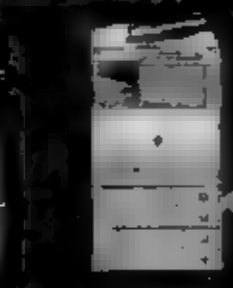
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IMMINENT DESTRUCTION

Ifugao folk concerned about granary in London

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—CORDILLERANS HERE and abroad have started a campaign to save an authentic Ifugao granary located inside the Philippine Embassy compound in London which the government was scheduled to demolish following a "death ritual" on Saturday.

Ifugao families based in the United Kingdom alerted relatives here about the impending destruction of the rice granary, which was bought from a family in Kiangnan, Ifugao, in 1995.

The administrator of www.thenashman.blogspot.com posted photographs of the hut, which was described as a granary built in the 1920s "by the late mumbaki (ritual priest) Timmukpaw Bantullay in the village of Ungul in Barangay Pula."



The embassy had announced that it found no suitable custodian for the hut, now that it was relocating out of its Kensington Palace Green address, according to posts made in blogs maintained by Cordillerans this week.

Ifugao Gov. Teodoro Baguilat Jr. said the hut's predicament was "unjustifiable."

He said government officials once consulted him about relocating an Ifugao hut inside a Philippine property abroad, but had not followed up this request with information until the embassy announcement this week.

"I did not even know it was [a hut in the Philippine Embassy in London]. I can't even remember the government official who referred it to me. In the first place, bringing the hut to London as decoration is culturally inappropriate, and now they have no use for it, the hut is discarded just like that," Baguilat said.

He said Ifugao huts are probably as popular as the centuries-old rice terraces in the province.

Ifugao huts are intricately designed, and are erected "like lego-sens" because each beam is shaped by hand to fit together without using nails, he said.

"There is actually no death ritual ac-

corded properties. There is a ritual conducted when Ifugao huts are transferred, but if government is going to spend at all on the hut, it may as well be for its relocation and not a 'death ritual,'" Baguilat said.

Some Igorot bloggers indicated in several posts that the "death ritual" for the hut had offended them.

The administrator of igorotblogger.blogspot.com wrote: "I guess I'm a bit mad with what is going to happen to this Ifugao hut because the last time I was in my village back home, I noticed that the last inatep (Sagada traditional house) was no longer where it used to stand."

"Apparently, the owner found the inatep hard to maintain, decided to build a house with a GI roof, and sold the inatep to an antique buyer so he can use the money to buy GI sheets," the blogger wrote.

It would be "hard to excuse this death ritual that the Philippine Embassy is planning in London," the blogger said.

"They are going to destroy a heritage object just because they are moving to another address? How shortsighted is that? I do not think any other nation will ever entertain the idea of doing something like this. But the Philippines, with its very bad sense of heritage conservation, not only entertains the idea but continues to destroy its heritage mindlessly."

Baguilat said he was contacting his relatives based in London to let them take custody of the granary because it will take another Ifugao to reconstruct it after it is dismantled and shipped out of the embassy compound.

He said Cordillerans have become sensitive to the fate of their relics since stories about artifacts stolen and shipped abroad caught their attention.

One of the most controversial artifacts returned to the Cordillera was the mummified remains of Apo Anno, which were stolen from a Benguet cave in the early 1900s. The mummy was returned to its burial cave in 1999.

NATIONAL NGO TRADE FAIR

17-19 December 2007
TriNoma Activity Center, TriNoma Mall, Quezon City

Hosted by the Caucus of Development NGO Networks (CODE-NGO) and the Peace and Equity Foundation, Inc. (PEF)

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The National NGO Trade Fair is open to the public from 10 am to 10 pm.

highlights

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Come to the Opening Ceremonies on December 17, 5pm!

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More Sports on A29-A32

SPORTS



COCA-Cola's Ricky Calimag (right) grabs the shirt of Welcoat's Nir Belasco as they jockey for rebounding position. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Tigers extend win run

By June Navarro

COCA-COLA ENCOUNTERED LITTLE trouble and strolled to its fourth straight win with a resounding 86-72 victory over Welcoat last night in the Smart-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

As Taulava was again at the forefront of the Tigers' attack, banging in 32 points and grabbing 18 rebounds despite the highly physical plays thrown at him by the Dragons.

Rookie Ryan Araña stuck out a foot as Taulava was about to land, sending the 6-foot-9 behemoth crashing down hard on the floor during the closing minutes of the third period.

Infuriated, Taulava chased the 5-foot-10 rookie down court but cleverly overcame his anger as Welcoat's Rob Wainwright stopped him on his tracks before he could take a shot at Araña.

"I got beaten up so bad out there," said Taulava, who led the Tigers to their fourth victory in a row since the 2003 MVP was traded by Talk 'N Text.

"At first, I was a little upset. But it was just an accident. He's (Araña) just trying his best to help his team win. I apologized to him," added Taulava after a fifth straight double-double performance for the Tigers.

Suddenly, the Tigers are now in contention for a quarterfinals playoff slot after catching up with the Air21 Express at 5-8. The Dragons, who lost for the seventh straight time, tumbled to 3-11.

Meanwhile, the PBA is expected to announce its new commissioner today as the league's board of governors makes a choice from among lawyer Chito Salud, Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas executive director Patrick Gregorio and Nextel executive Lambert Ramos.

Jayjay Helterbrand fired 34 points and Ronald Tubid added 27 as Barangay Ginebra dealt Magnolia its third straight defeat, 115-100, in the other game. Ginebra improved to 6-8 while Magnolia dropped to 7-7.

The scores:

First game

COCA-COLA 86—Taulava 32, Cabagnot 13, Calimag 11, Buenafe 10, Enrile 8, Dimaunahan 4, Misolas 2, Tolomia 2, Duran 2, Tejan 2, Isip 0, Arigo 0.

WELCOAT 72—De Vance 26, Ibanes 13, Dulay 8, Araña 8, Belasco 7, Tangkay 3, Wainwright 3, Ballesteros 2, Mente 1, Galig 0, Lopez 0, Sta. Maria 0.

Quarters: 21-4, 45-21, 70-53, 86-72

Second game

GINEBRA 115—Helterbrand 34, Tubid 27, Menk 12, Artadi 10, Mamarti 10, Caguioa 10, Reavis 7, Salvacion 5, Escalona 0, Macapagal 0.

MAGNOLIA 100—Selgie 19, Idefonso 18, Villanueva 16, Tagade 9, Pena 7, Calaguio 6, Montiveros 6, Tenorio 5, Racela 5, Gonzales 4, Villanueva 3, Erian 2.

Quarters: 24-21, 48-38, 82-65, 115-100



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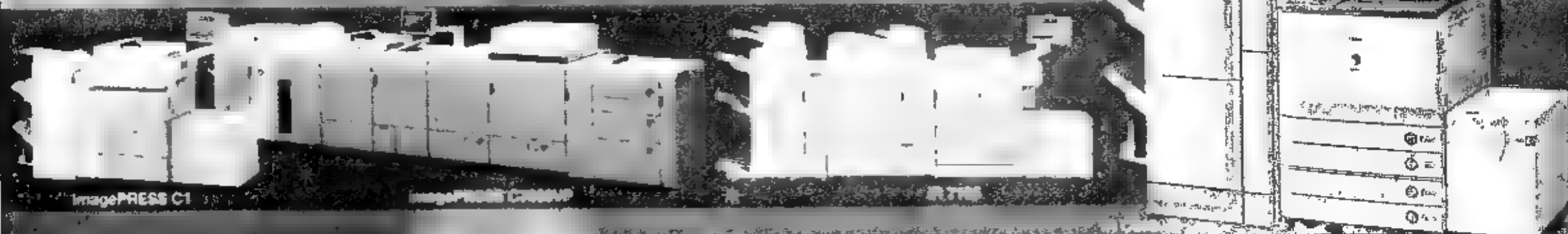


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QC cop shoots dead 15-year-old suspect

By Jeannette I. Andrade

A TEENAGER WHO REPORTEDLY broke into a bakeshop to steal a gun was killed in a shootout with policemen while his companion—also a minor—was arrested in Quezon City before dawn yesterday.

Mark Anthony Salem, 15, of 11th Street, Barangay Damayang Lagi in New Manila, died on arrival at the East Avenue Medical Center from a bullet wound in the chest.

His cohort, also a 15-year-old boy, is set to be turned over to the custody of the social welfare department.

Based on police reports, Salem and his cohort broke into the Red Ribbon bakeshop on Dona Hemady Street near the corner of E. Rodriguez Boulevard in Barangay Kristong Han at around 3 a.m. yesterday.

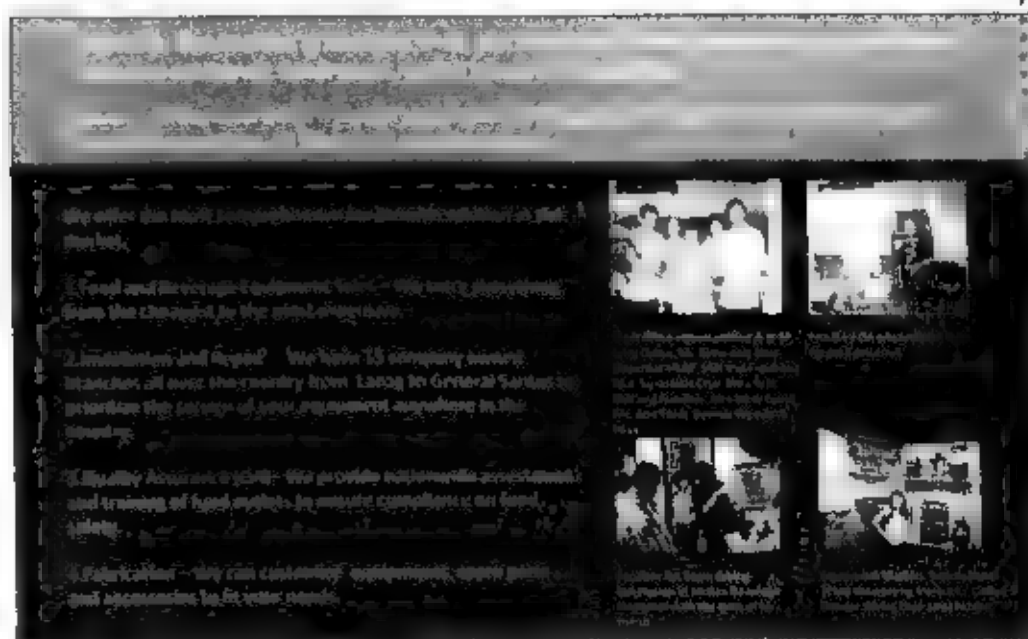
When the establishment's security guard, Edwin Endino, heard noises coming from the administrative offices on the second floor, he decided to investigate.

On his way up, he met the two boys who ran away, bringing with them a .38 caliber revolver which they allegedly took from one of the offices.

Endino shouted for help and was heard by policemen from the Quezon City Police District Station 11 who were on patrol outside a church in front of the store.

The policemen chased the two and caught Salem's companion on E. Rodriguez Boulevard. Salem was shot on Doña Hemady Street after he allegedly trained the stolen gun on the policeman who was running after him.

Upon realizing that they had shot a minor, the policemen rushed Salem to the hospital to try to save him but their efforts proved futile.



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Water projects to benefit 51,500 homes

By Amy R. Remo

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES INC. LAST week signed an agreement with the Manila City government for the swift completion of water improvement projects expected to benefit 51,500 households.

The memorandum of agreement, which was signed by Maynilad and Mayor Alfredo Lim, details both parties' cooperation in implementing the water firm's 2008 capital expenditure projects (Capex) for the city worth P1.56 billion.

These include replacing old pipelines to improve water supply and pressure in Manila.

Once completed, the projects will allow the company to recover some 242 million liters of water daily, which are lost due to leaks and illegal connections.

The recovered volume will then be re-allocated to areas that need additional water supply.

In a statement, Maynilad president Rogelio Singson expressed appreciation for the city's assistance, especially in the approval and release of excavation permits, saying this is vital for the swift completion of pipe-laying works.

"We want to continue working with Mayor Lim and the City of Manila. And as we do this, we want to promote discipline among our contractors and ensure order at the construction sites to minimize inconvenience to the public," he said.

Maynilad's capex program for the city involves the laying of 130 kilometers of new pipelines.

Pipe rehabilitation work is also ongoing in the Port Area, Basco, Ermita, Intramuros and Malate.

An estimated 462,000 people will benefit from the improved supply.

As provided for under the agreement, Maynilad will also launch a program to provide sufficient water and drinking stations to all public schools in Manila.

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DID YOU KNOW

EVERY December, members of the Alpha Phi Omega fraternity run naked around the University of the Philippines Diliman campus. The Oblation Run, named after the famous UP statue, started in 1977 as a publicity stunt for the movie "Hubad na Bayan (Naked Hero)," which was critical of the Marcos dictatorship.

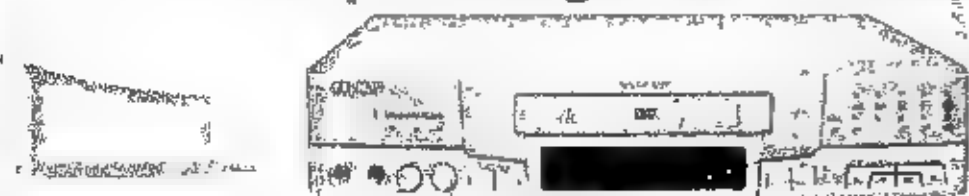
Recent Oblation Runs called attention to issues like tuition increase, illegal drugs and the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. In 2000, the naked runners called for the resignation of then President Joseph Estrada who was facing corruption charges.

In August 2006, the APO staged a "special edition" of the run in reaction to Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's statement that UP was a breeding ground of destabilizers and naked men running around the campus.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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Asia faces trillion-dollar burden fighting TB

WASHINGTON—ELEVEN ASIAN nations facing the biggest threat from tuberculosis risk being saddled with a whopping trillion-dollar economic burden over the next 10 years if they do not beef up their anti-TB strategy, a landmark study shows.

Led by China and India, the countries are already implementing a prevention and treatment strategy, popularly known as DOTS introduced by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the 1990s.

But the DOTS (the directly observed therapy) strategy was not sufficient to reduce the incidence of the disease, particularly in HIV-infected people and due to drug resistance, and had to be restructured.

A World Bank study released last week for the first time captured the economic benefits of extending the revamped DOTS strategy as proposed in the organization's Global Plan to Stop TB covering the 2006-2015 period.

The research covered 22 "high-

burden" tuberculosis-endemic countries, including China, India, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Burma (Myanmar), Pakistan and Vietnam.

"These Asian nations have to grapple with a \$1.17-trillion economic cost over a 10-year period if TB prevention and control are sustained at current levels of treatment," Ramanan Laxminarayan, an economist who led the study, told AFP.

"But if they embrace WHO's

global plan they could collectively save about \$10-billion each year or \$100 billion during the 10-year period," he said. "However, the costs of the global plan may be greater than these benefits in some countries."

TB is the leading infectious killer of adults in Asia. The worst affected nations are China, India and Indonesia.

"This important new study shows us why TB control is a smart investment in lasting development for low- and middle-income coun-

tries," said Joy Phumaphi, the World Bank's vice president for human development.

"This economic justification for TB control strengthens the case for governments and donors to sharply reduce TB prevalence and deaths in the name of better health and higher incomes for people living at grave risk of TB illness and death," Phumaphi said.

The economic impact of TB deaths and the benefits of TB control among the 22 high-bur-

den countries are greatest in China and India, where the combination of growing incomes and a relatively high number of TB deaths translates into a significant economic effect, the study showed.

Laxminarayan pointed out that the 11 Asian nations accounted for one million of the 1.7 million deaths from TB in the 22 countries covered by the study, saying that extending DOTS coverage could slash mortality considerably. **AFP**

WORLD BRIEFS

US reviews Afghan mission amid concerns

WASHINGTON—Deeply concerned about the prospect of failure in Afghanistan, the Bush administration and NATO have begun three top-to-bottom reviews of the entire mission: from security and counterterrorism to political consolidation and economic development according to US and alliance officials. The reviews are an acknowledgment of the need for greater coordination in fighting the Taliban and al-Qaida in Afghanistan, halting the rising opium production and trafficking that finances the insurgency and helping the Kabul government extend its legitimacy and control. Taken together, these efforts reflect a growing apprehension that one of the administration's most important legacies—the routing of Taliban and Qaida forces in Afghanistan after the 9/11 attacks—may slip away, according to administration officials. Unlike the administration's review of Iraq policy a year ago, which was announced with fanfare and resulted in a large increase in troops, the US reviews of the Afghan strategy have not been announced and are not expected to result in a similar infusion of combat forces. **NYT**

Turkish planes bomb northern Iraq

SULA MANIYA, IRAQ—Turkish warplanes bombed villages deep in northern Iraq early on Sunday, killing one woman and wounding two other people in one of the heaviest raids against Kurdish rebels in months, local officials said. In Ankara, the Turkish military's General Staff said in a statement its warplanes had attacked targets of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party, which uses northern Iraq as a base from which to attack security forces inside Turkey. **Reuters**

Stem cells from fat to fix breasts defects

SAN ANTONIO—For the first time, doctors have used stem cells from liposuctioned fat to fix breast defects in women who have had cancerous lumps removed. The approach is still experimental, but holds promise for millions of women left with cratered areas and breasts that look very different from each other after cancer surgery. It also might be a way to augment healthy breasts without using artificial implants. So far, it has only been tested on about two dozen women in a study in Japan. But doctors in the United States say it has great potential. **AP**



HERE COME CHRISTMAS
A woman rides in a float as she takes part in the Light Festival Parade in San Jose, California, Dec. 15. Thousands of people attended this festival usher in Christmas in the United States. **AFP**

Obama hits his stride as Clinton staggers

DES MOINES, IOWA—BARACK Obama is hitting his stride, just as Hillary Clinton's Democratic juggernaut stutters, setting up a punch-for-punch 18-day run-in to the first White House nominating clash.

The race is a statistical dead heat in Iowa, before the fabled nominating caucuses on Jan. 3, and a dogfight in New Hampshire, where votes five days later.

Most surveys show Obama rising, and the longtime frontrunner sliding, suggesting that the young senator's timing may be spot on.

An Obama spurt which began in Iowa, appears to be spreading, raising doubts about the notion that Clinton can afford a loss in Iowa, due to a lead in national polls and a firewall in later states.

"The impression starting to form out here is the same," said Dante Scala, a professor at the University of New Hampshire.

"From Hillary Clinton having a large lead, to Hillary Clinton basically being in a statistical tie—a one-point lead is not a very high wall."

Should the Illinois senator win the nomination, an encounter this week between the foes on an airport tarmac in

Washington may come to be seen as the moment when history's course was set.

Clinton, who once reigned over the Democratic field, had to offer an embarrassing personal apology, after an aide raised Obama's dabbling in drugs as a wayward teenager, in her campaign's latest clumsy attack on him.

Hours later, in the last pre-caucuses Democratic debate, Obama displayed a new confidence, and brushed aside Clinton, who's previous imperiousness was replaced by a scrappy new persona.

Obama, former Democratic Sen. Bob Kerrey told The Los Angeles Times, has "either peaked, or he's on a trend line that is going to make him the nominee of the party."

Whether this is an Obama boom, or an Obama bust will likely be decided by the rivals' exhausting treks through Iowa in the next 18 days.

Clinton aims to solidify her support among women and older voters who are most likely to caucus. Obama hopes to confound predictions his legions of young voters will not show up to caucus.

The ex-first lady is putting on a brave face, despite the indignity of having to deny her campaign is disintegrating. **AFP**

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The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

US now balks at climate accord

NUSA DUA, INDONESIA—A hard-fought deal fixing a 2009 deadline for a new treaty to tackle global warming ran straight into trouble on Sunday with the United States voicing "serious concerns" over its provisions.

As negotiators headed home after two weeks of intense haggling, the White House complained that the agreement did not do enough to commit major emerging economies such as China and India to big cuts in greenhouse gas emissions.

It underlined lingering division over how to confront the perils of global warming, which scientists warn will put millions of people at risk of hunger, homelessness and disease by the end of the century if temperatures keep rising at current rates.

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, who flew to the Indonesian island of Bali for a late appeal for flexibility, praised the agreement as a "pivotal first step" to tackle what he called "the defining challenge of our time."

With the deal, the summit of 190 nations launched a process to negotiate a new treaty for when the UN Kyoto Protocol's pledges on slashing greenhouse gas emissions expire in 2012.

"Last night in Bali the world community decided to take a bold step into the future," Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, who came to power last month and swiftly reversed the country's previous stance by ratifying Kyoto, said in Brisbane. "But it's only one step and we've got a long, long way to go."

European nations and environmentalists broadly welcomed the move, although it did not go as far as many had wished by failing to specify any targets for slashing the emissions blamed for global warming.

An isolated US delegation had backed down during an unannounced 13th day of talks and said it would finally accept the deal, but hours later US President George W. Bush's administration appeared to take a step back.

The White House said any Kyoto successor treaty must acknowledge a country's sovereign right to pursue economic growth and energy security.

While there were several positive aspects to the Bali deal, it added, the "United States does have serious concerns about other aspects of the decision as we begin the negotiations."

The United States is the only major industrialized nation to reject Kyoto, arguing it is unfair as it does not require rapidly growing emerging economies such as China to meet targeted emissions cuts.

China is the world's second largest greenhouse-gas emitter after the United States, and is also outside the Kyoto treaty.

The White House said future talks must acknowledge that developed nations could not tackle climate change on their own through targeted emissions cuts, and that major emerging economies had to be drawn in.

"Empirical studies on emission trends in the major developing economies now conclusively establish that emissions reductions principally by the developed world will be insufficient to confront the global problem effectively."

AFP



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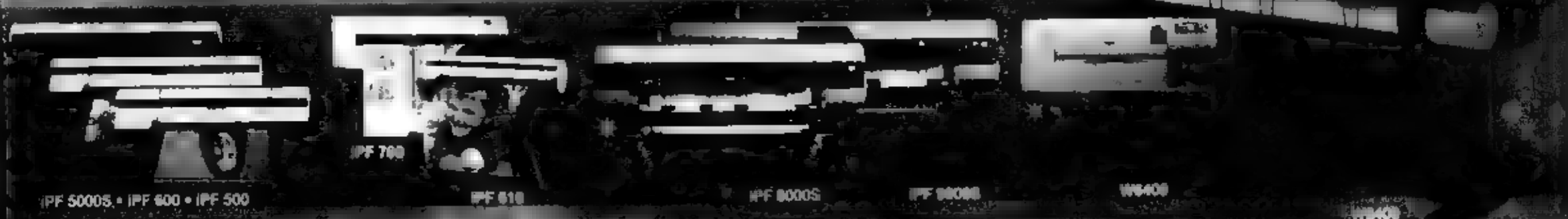


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RP loses clout in 14 pet events



SAVING GRACE: Super tanker Miguel Molina's four-gold harvest eased, sort of, the pain of the Philippines' debacle in the SEA Games. **www.usa.com**

8-sport golden flop consigns Pinoys to worst SEAG finish

By Ernesto A. Gonzales
 Sports Features Editor

NAKHON RATCHASIMA—IF there really was no way for Thailand to lose, there really was no way either for the defending champion Philippines to place no lower than fifth in the 24th Southeast Asian Games here.

The Thais did prove untouchable, claiming their most bountiful harvest of 183 gold medals from 42 sports to celebrate the 80th birthday of their King and highlight their fourth overall championship since the SEAG started in 1977.

But the Filipinos, who captured 113 golds from the 40-sport roster in the Manila SEAG two years ago, failed even to manage a fifth-place finish. In the end, they wound up a worst-ever sixth by coming up with only 41 golds, two behind Singapore.

Malaysia, the 2001 champion, emerged the surprise second overall with 67 golds followed by 2003 winner Vietnam with 64. Indonesia, the winningest country with nine championships in what has become an 11-nation regional games, was fourth.

After crashing the winners' row in 30 events in Manila, the Filipinos could only deliver in 16 sports, this time with eight medals (four gold, three silver, one bronze), contributed a total of 27 golds in 2005—chipping in a ton of meaningless silver and bronze medals.

The golden flops were traditional boat racing, wrestling, bowling, shooting, karate, muay thai, golf and baseball, which can no longer claim superiority in the sport even in the region after taking another loss from Asian Games conqueror Thailand in their title showdown here.

The top NSA proved to be swimming, which doubled its golden output in 2005 with eight while parading the SEAG's top male athlete in Miguel Molina, who won three individual golds and another in the

RP LOSES / A30

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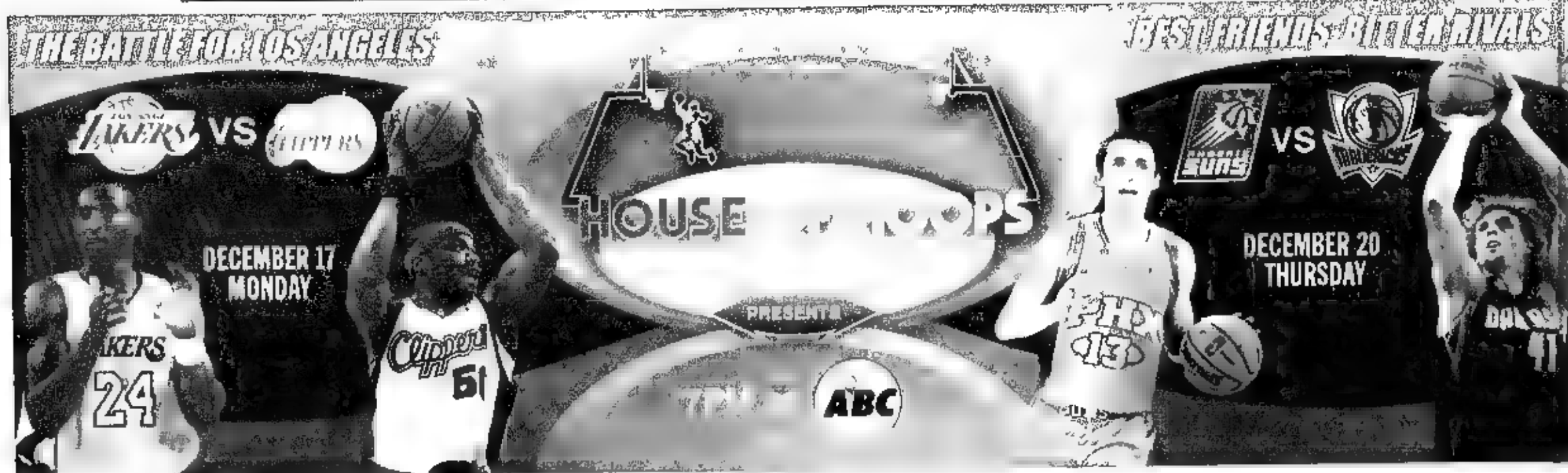
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STOCK MARKET
PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

(See stock market report on Page B6)

Correction seen to continue

THE TRADING OUTLOOK NEXT WEEK appeared to be mixed, with a few analysts pointing to some buying, as the index nears a critical psychological level.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index last Friday lost 87 points and closed at 3,538.69.

"With Friday's decline, it is likely that

CORRECTION/ B6

OFWs seen to pour in \$15.7B in '08

BSP sees no letup in remittances, expects inflows to surge by 10%

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas expects overseas Filipinos to pour in an estimated \$15.7 billion next year—a 10-percent surge in remittances that are coursed through banks—further fueling the consumption-driven domestic economy.

In a briefing Friday night, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said total remittances in 2008 could even reach \$16.2 billion, if the BSP were to include inflows sent through non-banking channels. This would represent a year-on-year growth of 8 percent over the aggregate level of \$15 billion expected for 2007.

Tetangco said that for this year, the banking system would likely capture \$14.3 billion in remittances, up by 12 percent over last year's inflows. The projected figure for 2007 represents about 95 percent of total remittances.

If the BSP were to include money coursed outside the banking system, total remittances could hit \$15 billion by the end of the year—up by 7 percent over last year, and higher than the BSP's earlier expected total growth of 5 percent, Tetangco said.

Nonbank or informal remittance channels are defined as unlicensed or unregulated operations, such as money sent through relatives, acquaintances or other travelers.

Based on the BSP's forecasts for next year, the banking system would be able to capture 97 percent of total remittance flows, indicating that the share of the informal channel would shrink further from 5 percent this year to 3 percent.

An earlier study on the Mexican experience showed that remittances held as deposits in the banking system would be two to three times more beneficial than those coursed elsewhere, as these formal inflows could be invested, particularly in small and micro businesses.

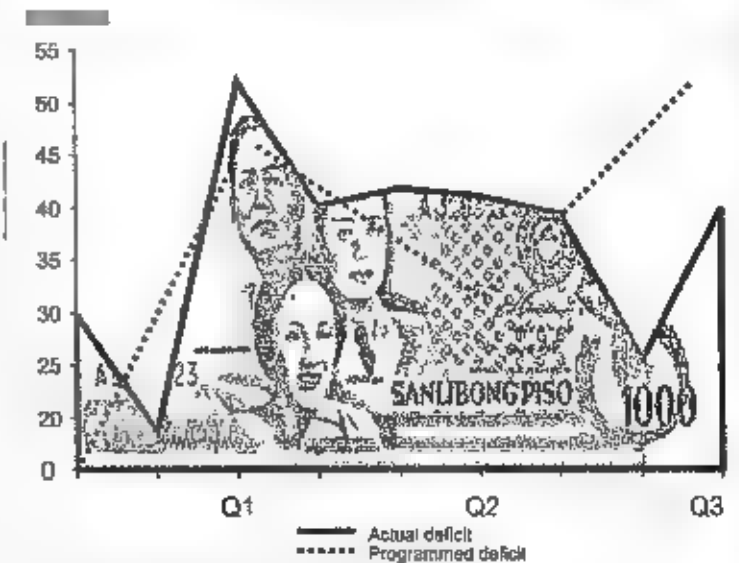
As such, the BSP is promoting the use of formal banking channels as a safer, more pro-

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Figures that matter in our nation's life

Government's fiscal deficit at P40 B (January-September 2007)

After registering surpluses in five of the first nine months of the year the national government's fiscal surplus of P40 billion for the first three quarters is P14 billion lower than the programmed ceiling for the period.



Shimao to pursue \$2-B investment in RP, BCDA says

By Ronnel W. Domingo

CHINESE REAL ESTATE GIANT Shanghai Shimao group is expected to submit to the Bases Conversion Development Authority within two weeks a final proposal for its planned \$2-billion investment in Bonifacio Global City.

BCDA president and chief executive Narciso L. Abaya said Shimao

maintained a keen interest in two properties at the former military base—the 7-hectare North Bonifacio lots and the Jsmag area further south in Taguig City.

Covering at least 35 hectares, the Jsmag housing area was recently repossessed following a long-drawn ownership dispute with retired Armed Forces officials who were

evicted from the area.

The Shimao group had approached BCDA earlier this year regarding a joint venture for its plans to invest in high-end hotels, condominiums, offices and a commercial complex.

Abaya said that BCDA would consider whether to go through a Swiss challenge once Shimao sends in its proposal.

He explained that joint venture agreements for both properties would go through a bidding or a modified bidding such as a Swiss challenge, following a government policy that requires a competitive process for the selection of JVA partners.

In an interview in September, Abaya said the National Economic and Development

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■ **No Free Lunch: Unsustainable lifestyles /B2**

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Debt restructuring deal with John Hay firm OK'd

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE BASES CONVERSION DEVELOPMENT Authority has agreed to a new restructuring deal for the P2.2 billion worth of arrears of Camp John Hay Development Corp., the private developer of the former US military facility in Baguio City.

The amount represents the rental fees for Camp John Hay over the last 10 years that CJHDevCo failed to pay.

The BCDA said it had agreed to the deal with the John Hay developer given the expected signing of an agreement with a "significant" locator within this month.

Narciso L. Abaya, BCDA president and chief executive, said the deal would allow CJHDevCo to pay P150 million a year for the next 15 years. It would be signed before the end of this year.

Abaya said CJHDevCo was expected to enter into an agreement with a locator, which was seen to be the source of about half of the yearly payment.

"I cannot name this locator yet but this company has agreed to assign to the BCDA about (P75 million) yearly," he added.

The BCDA chief said further the agency would simultaneously sign all the agreements concerning the three-way arrangement within two weeks.

This development pushed further the prospects of encouraging more investors to do business in the former US military facility following a 25-year lease agreement signed with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in January, which covers part of the Camp John Hay property in Baguio City.

Presidential Proclamation No. 1191 issued in December 2005 designated the 301.86-hectare John Hay Special Economic

Zone as a special tourism economic zone.

According to BCDA subsidiary John Hay Management Corp., the lease covered a 6.5-hectare lot that Peza would offer as expansion areas for existing locators as well as sites for new investors at the state-run Baguio City Economic Zone.

The lease contract was signed while the BCDA was locked on an impasse with CJHDevCo over the arrears.

The matter is currently pending in court and Caude declined to discuss it, citing a restraining order from the judiciary.

The dispute put sub-lessees of land under a separate lease agreement with CJHDevCo in a quandary over a March 2005 Supreme Court decision that voided a provision of Presidential Proclamation No. 420 which granted tax exemptions and financial incentives to the John Hay SEZ.

Inflation seen at 3.5% in '09

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS expects a slowdown in the country's inflation rate in the next two years despite continuing risks from rising oil and commodity prices.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. announced on Friday an inflation rate target of 3.5 percent for 2009, lower than the 4 percent target for next year.

Under the central bank's targeting system, a leeway equivalent to one percentage point up and below (plus or minus) the exact inflation target for each year is allowed. This means the inflation rate range for 2009 would be wider at 2.5 percent to 4.5 percent and for 2008, 3-5 percent.

Tetangco also said that in line with the favorable inflation outlook, growth in broad money supply would likely be kept below the 20 percent indicative growth level.

"We will manage liquidity in a way consistent with the inflation target and economic growth of the Philippines. I think we'll still be below 20 percent (m3 or domestic liquidity growth)," he said.

An inflation-targeting central bank means monetary management, such as any decision to hike or cut short-term interest rates or adjust bank reserves, is based on the actual inflation path and not just on growth of liquidity in the financial system. **Doris C. Dumitao**

OFWs seen . . . From page B1

ductive way for millions of Filipinos working abroad to send in money.

The so-called leakage in the Philippine remittance pipeline has gone down from as high as 20 to 30 percent about two to three years ago.

Asked whether he thought the country could sustain increases in the deployment of workers abroad, Tetangco said global demand for Filipino manpower remained very strong.

"It depends on whether we can train more people," he said. "We need to train manpower, there's a demand."

Based on the latest data from the BSP, money sent home by overseas Filipinos through banks surged by 17.1 percent year-on-year to hit an all-time high of \$1.4 billion in October.

The BSP attributed this development to the increase in deployment of workers abroad, as well as improved remittance channels.

This brought the 10-month remittances from overseas Filipino workers to \$11.9 billion—up by 15.2 percent from last year.

For the full year, however, Tetangco projected only a growth of 12 percent in banking remittances.

Shimao . . . From page B1

opment Authority was working on the terms of reference on how to enter into JVs.

Last May, Abaya said Shimao chair Hui Wing Mao personally reiterated his firm interest in investing at the former Fort Bonifacio during a meeting with BCDA officials in Hong Kong that month.

He said Shimao was a world-class, fast paced developer that could finish a 900-room twin-tower luxury hotel in 18 months, as what they did with the Hyatt Hotel at the Bund in Shanghai.

Abaya, along with BCDA chair Aloysius Santos, went to Hong Kong to return a visit Hui made in March, during which the two parties signed an agreement for joint development of a sizable lot at Bonifacio Global City.

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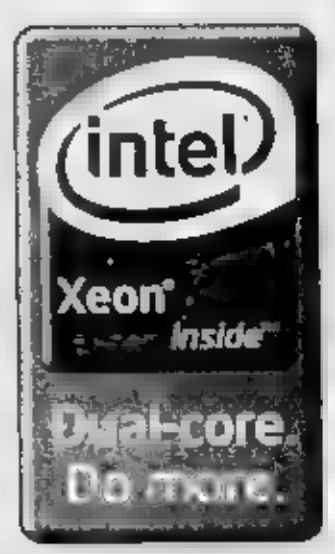
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SO THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

I. ACCORDING TO STATEMENTS MADE IN THE ORIENTAL PENINSULA PROSPECTUS, "1. The company, Oriental Peninsula Prospectus, will initially start its mining operations in Pulot Mine in Española and not in the Toronto Mine in Narra. Further, the Toronto Mine has only an area of 768 hectares, which means that PGMc is only in possession of 2.6% of the said Toronto Mines."

THE DOCUMENTED FACT:

1. Regional Trial Court of Palawan, Branch 95 Decision on Civil Case #4199 dated July 21, 2006.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, let a writ of PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION BE ISSUED directing defendant Olympic Mines and Development Corporation, its assignees and successors-in-interest Citinickel Mines and Development Corp., agents, representatives or persons or entitles acting on its behalf or under its authority, control or influence, to CEASE and DESIST from performing any act that will tend to impede, hamper, limit or adversely affect the full enjoyment by plaintiff corporation of its rights under the operating agreement such as and including, but not limited to the following:

- Making representations of claims with any person, including the proper government agencies, that the operating agreement has already been terminated or is no longer in effect;
- Making representations or claims with any person, including the proper government agencies, that plaintiff has violated any of defendant's rights under the operating agreement; and
- Interfering with the possession, control and/or operation of the Pulot Nickel Mine and the Toronto Nickel Mine;
- Performing any act which will disturb the status quo.
- In view of the several complaints and petitions already filed by defendant and dismissed at its own instance, from filing further complaints/petitions on the basis of the alleged termination of the operating agreement.

2. Regional Trial Court of Palawan, Branch 52 Decision on Civil Case #4181 dated April 26, 2006 Plaintiff added that on July 18, 2003 plaintiff (Olympic) and defendant (Platinum) forged into an Operating Agreement allowing Platinum to explore, develop, mine and mill beneficiate the said mining areas (Toronto Nickel Mine and Pulot Nickel Mine) with a total area of 2,176.00 hectares (Annex "A"). Pursuant thereto, defendant was allowed and authorized by plaintiff to process the latter's application in the name and in behalf of plaintiff with the MGB and concerned government agencies as well as local government units.

3. Court of Appeals 11th Division on CA-G.R. SP No. 99422 dated Nov. 20, 2007.

ELEVENTH DIVISION

CITINICKEL MINES &
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION,

CA-G.R. SP No. 99422

Members:
Petitioner,

GUEVARA-SALONGA, J.,
(Chairperson),

-versus-

ROXAS, V.Q., and
GARCIA, R.R., JJ.

JUDGE BIENVENIDAO C.
BLANCAFLOR, in his capacity
as Presiding Judge, Branch 95,
Regional Trial Court, Puerto
Princesa City and Promulgated:
PLATINUM GROUP METALS
CORPORATION,
Respondents.

The Fallo

WHEREFORE, for lack of merit, petition is hereby DISMISSED. Due to forum shopping, triple costs against herein petitioner CITINICKEL.

SO ORDERED.

(ORIGINAL SIGNED)

VICENTE Q. ROXAS
Associate Justice

CERTIFIED TRUE COPY

WE CONCUR:

Tammy Ann C. Reyes-Mendillo
Division Clerk of Court
Court of Appeals

(ORIGINAL SIGNED)

(ORIGINAL SIGNED)

J. GUEVARA-SALONGA
Associate Justice

RAMON R. GARCIA
Associate Justice

II. A PAID ADVERTISEMENT FROM ORIENTAL PENINSULA DATED DECEMBER 14, 2007 states that "In denr case no 2006-02b, the panel of arbitrators of the mines and geosciences bureau of the denr (panel), which has the exclusive jurisdiction over disputes involving mining rights, ordered on october 30, 2006 cancellation of the operating agreement between pgmc and olympic mines and development corporation (predecessor- in interest of citinickel) and further declared it without force and effect. On january 8, 2007, the panel declared that its resolution cancelling the operating agreement has attained finality and therefore final and executory. Thus, in an order dated april 11, 2007 the panel of arbitrators ordered pgmc to vacate the mining areas in dispute and to cease and desist from conducting mining operations therein."

THE DOCUMENTED FACT: It follows that the October 30, 2006 Resolution cannot become final and executory – for being null and void – for violating the Writ of Preliminary Injunction previously issued by Branch 95 RTC of Puerto Princesa City pursuant to its assailed July 21, 2006 Order.

THEIR ADVERTISEMENT FURTHER STATES: "As mpsa holder, citinickel is in full possession of the mineral property contrary to the claim of pgmc. A filed validation was conducted by the mgb on the said mineral property. Further, the pse also made an ocular inspection thereon as part of the process of evaluating oriental peninsula's listing application.

CLEARLY, THIS IS A VIOLATION of the Cease and Desist Order of RTC Branch 95 which was upheld by the Court of Appeals Eleventh Division, on November 20, 2007.

PLATINUM GROUP METALS CORP

DOE seeks support for renewable energy bill

By Abigail L. Ho

AMID THE INTENSIFYING ADVERSE effects of climate change on the country, the Department of Energy is urging the public to support the renewable energy bill in Congress.

Fresh from the United Nations climate change conference in Bali, Indonesia, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the increased use of renewable energy resources could be one of the best ways to mitigate the bad effects of global warming and climate change.

He recently met with members of the Renewable Energy Coalition during a visit to the Chevron Geothermal Holdings Philippines Inc. steam field facility in Laguna, where he urged the group to help push for the passage of the pending bill.

"The imperatives for the development and use of reliable energy resources are defined by the compelling situations we have at hand—from climate change, energy security to the local and national development situation," he said in a statement over the weekend.

"Renewable energy reduces harmful gas emissions from fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, thus promoting a 'green' environment," he added.

He said that with the right incentives, an encouraging policy environment and market rules, investors would be more easily compelled to develop renewable energy resources, resulting in substantial air quality benefits and energy self-sufficiency.

The renewable energy bill is expected to spur investments in the renewable energy sector because of the incentives that are included in it.

These incentives include exemptions from tariff duties and zero-rated value-added tax for the importation of machinery and equipment for the first 10 years of an operating contract, as well as tax credit on domestic capital equipment and services.

Special realty tax rates will also be granted for equipment and machinery to be used in geothermal energy development. An income tax holiday will also be provided to protect investments for the first six profitable commercial operations.

The bill has been pending in its various forms for almost two decades now.

It almost became a law in the 13th Congress.

Having spent the last century in the House of Representatives, Members reached only intermittent approval in the Senate.

Splash prepares to enter Brazil

LISTED FILIPINO PERSONAL CARE company, Splash Corp., is preparing to enter the Brazilian market after signing recently a memorandum of understanding with Brazilian firm Fignelli Com. Imp. Exp. Ltda.

Based in Niteroi, a city across the bay from Rio de Janeiro, Fignelli was appointed distributor for Theraherb VCO and VCO Manila, kicking off Splash Corp.'s first foray in the burgeoning Brazilian health and wellness market.

Fignelli was founded in 2006, fusing the expertise of Mauro Lins, a medical practitioner, and businessman Claudio Martinelli. The two were elementary school classmates and both have the same passion for providing reliable, natural and organic products for the Brazilian consumer. Martinelli is now the president and COO of Fignelli while Lins continues full-time work as head of the Integrative Medicine of Clinica Fluminense, one of the most prestigious anti-aging and esthetics clinics in Brazil.

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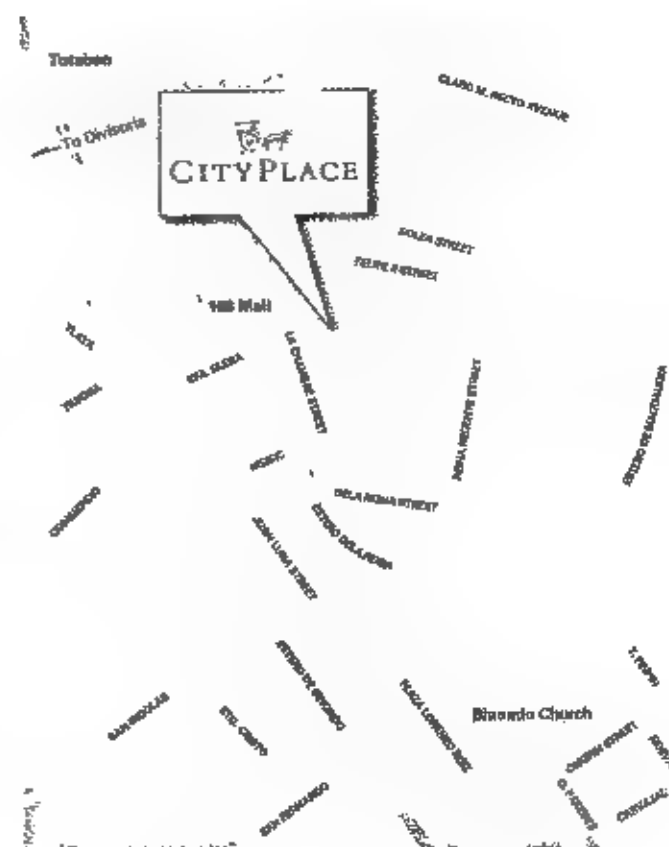
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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

BUSINESSMonday

How did your business fare in 2007? What's up for 2008?

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

BUSINESS MONDAY'S EXECUTIVE Forum asks executives—How did your company fare in 2007? How much did you grow? What projects, if any, did your company undertake? What are your expectations and plans for next year?

Good year

GMA 7's year-to-date total revenues closed at P9.813 billion or 9 percent higher from comparative figure in 2006. Similarly, year-to-date October revenues of QTV and international operations (GMA PinoyTV) rose by 63 percent and 48 percent, respectively.

Return on equity was at par with last year's 30 percent. This ratio was achieved despite the abrupt increase in total stockholders' equity as a result of the public listing of the network last July 30.

GMA Network Inc. launched its first international television channel, the GMA PinoyTV last February 2005. GMA PinoyTV is a 24-hour general interest channel broadcast in the Filipino language, with Filipino migrants and overseas contract workers as its target audience.

The network is also set to launch its second international channel, the GMA Life TV which is intended for distribution in platforms where GMA PinoyTV is carried. Its programming will largely be from QTV, which the network also operates. GMA Life TV will be skewed toward the female audience, and the channel will carry a movie block.

GMA Network continues its expansion projects in the regions such as the Bicol Region, Visayas and Mindanao. The network is set to complete both its Batangas and Naga transmitter facility upgrades by mid-January 2008. Likewise, the studio complex in Dagupan is targeted to be operational by end of January 2008, while the studios in Davao and Naga are set to be completed by February and third quarter next year, respectively.

The company is also constructing two state-of-the-art studios within its compound in Quezon City. The bigger studio targets to accommodate 800 to 1,000 persons, and the other one will house 300 to 400 persons. Both are expected to be finished by June next year.

The sister channel of GMA 7, QTV, is evolving into a more specialized channel with much improved programs to address all facets of womanhood.

GMA Network expects a much stronger patronage of the Kapuso Channel from its viewers, here and abroad. It hopes to generate bigger income from the many projects it will launch next year and from its expansion in both the international and regional networks. It targets to close the gap or even surpass the ratings competition with its closest TV network rival.

Felipe L. Gozon
President, GMA Network Inc.

Specialty coffee growing

The specialty coffee segment continues to grow. We have expanded our store network and will continue for the next year and hopefully beyond.

Projects we have started: our environmental initiatives from eco-compliant store designs and through our supply chain.

Environmental concerns are top priority. The whole coffee industry as an agricultural sector is vibrant due to increases in coffee prices making our farmers interested in growing coffee again.

We expect next year to still be bullish for the food and beverage industry, particularly the specialty coffee segment.

Chit U. Juan
CEO, Figaro Coffee Co.

Interesting for preventive healthcare

We found 2007 a very interesting year in the preventive healthcare market from several perspectives. Primarily it confirmed that a brand, when properly positioned,

HOW/B2-2

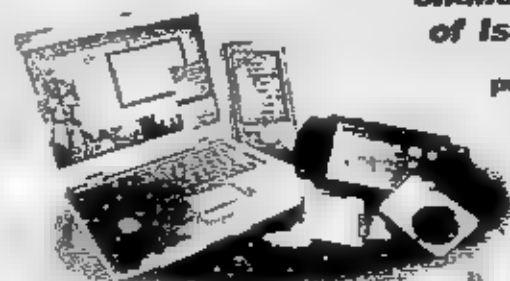
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CHIT U. JUAN

B2

BUSINESSMonday

Whiz kids learn people skills, too

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA—HANDS WAVE in the air as students join a spirited discussion about start-up financing and laughter ripples through the class when someone identifies the three "Fs" of independent funding: Friends, family, fools.

But this is not a business school course for fired-up young entrepreneurs. It is an engineering class at the University of California, Berkeley, even though the students do not look much like the stereotypical "gearheads" with pocket protectors. That is by design, part of a national push to produce graduates who are both technically savvy and people smart.

"It is no longer good enough for engineers to come out of school with purely technical-level training. They need to know the business environment in which

other things teaches entrepreneurial skills to Stanford's science and engineering students. "In this fast-paced world, engineers are not isolated in their cubes any more."

At engineering powerhouse MIT, the new approach was adopted in response to 1990s concerns about US productivity issues, said Barbara A. Masi, director of education innovation at MIT's engineering school.

The move to splice so-called "soft skills" into programs gained momentum when the accreditation body for engineering schools began requiring that schools teach things like teamwork and communication.

Much of the impetus for the change has come from the industry, including California's Silicon Valley.

Faculty at the University of Michigan gave overhauled courses and added projects that depend on team-building skills to give students a better sense of how to trans-

late technical savvy into real-world know-how.

"You can have an engineered object that is designed to make the world a better place, but if it can't be built and sold it won't do any good," said James Holloway, associate dean for undergraduate education in Michigan's College of Engineering.

Recent Stanford electrical engineering grad Joshua Reeves has found a grounding in teamwork was a help in the business world. "Nothing is individual. Nothing is me standing or sitting in a room," says Reeves, product manager at Zazzle, an Internet consumer site.

New methods favor a do-it-yourself approach, such as a challenge at Stanford earlier this year in which teams of engineering and other students were told to turn a single pack of Post-It notes into something of value. One team got noticed by selling ads on its notes.

But while courses have changed, public perceptions have not.

"That's unfortunate, that the images of engineering are still very 1960s," Masi says. "Our students have a lot of fun."

MIT engineering students have visited New Orleans to study post-Hurricane Katrina. AP

Foundation pours in visions and smiles

"NEVER ENDING care and everlasting love." These words of Cheng Yen serve as the inspiration of the volunteers of the Tzu Foundation Philippines, as they once again set another series of medical mission at the Buddhist Tzu Chi Clinic Philippines in Bacood, Sta Mesa, Manila.

On Nov. 29, 28 patients received and tried on their new dentures provided by the kind-hearted and generous donors of the foundation. The Tzu Chi volunteer doctors, Dr. Cheung, Dr. Uy, Dr. Lam and Dr. Oliva were also present to assist the patients and educate them on total oral hygiene and care of dentures. The doctors have also made further necessary adjustments for patients who have difficulty fitting their dentures.

Cheng Yen, a Buddhist nun from Taiwan, and the founder of the Tzu Chi Foundation, instructed the volunteers here in the Philippines to "Give the patients the best quality dentures, for this might be their only chance to have it."

The following day, another group of Tzu Chi volunteer doctors and ophthalmologists headed by Dr. Antonio Say treated and operated on 41 patients with cataract and pterygium.

The Tzu Chi Foundation Philippines was established in the country in 1994. Its founder, Cheng Yen, is a recipient of the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership in 1991 for her efforts in "reawakening Taiwan's modern people to the ancient Buddhist teachings of compassion and charity."

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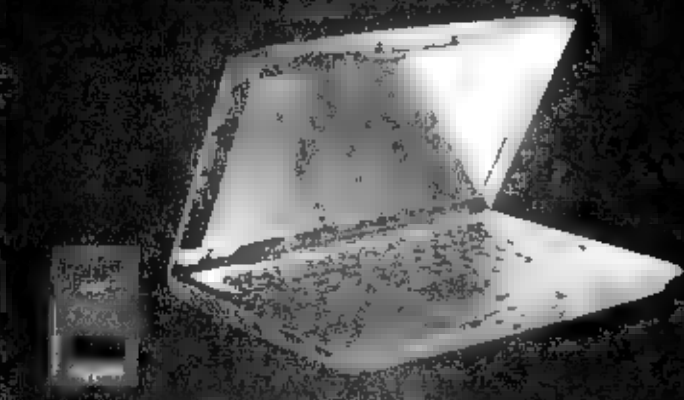
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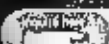
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BUSINESSMonday

How a bag can help the environment

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

RUSTAN'S SUPERCENTERS INC., operators of Shopwise and Rustan's supermarkets, says that its personnel would normally use up to 5.5 million plastic bags per month.

That all changed in July 2007 when the firm launched its Reusable Bag Program.

The reusable sacks are actually tote bags made of cloth that may hold twice the volume of a normal plastic bag you see at the checkout counter.

By using these tote bags with each trip to the supermarket, a customer gets to earn points.

Since July, the supermarket chain has sold up to 50,000 tote bags.

The result was a 49-percent decrease in monthly plastic bag consumption despite an eight-percent increase in sales.

The decline in the use of plastic bags may have been bad for plastic manufacturers, who lost about P2.4 to P3.2 million in sales a month. But this also means that there are 2.7 million less plastic bags in the environment.

RSI says it takes "approximately 200 years for a plastic bag to dissolve, and it would have taken 540 million years for these bags to disintegrate."

The Reusable Bag Program benefited the firm's business and the environment. RSI saved a few million by cutting down on its plastic bag purchase, while it earned a few million from the sale of its tote bags, which go for P100 each.

Shopwise marketing head Frances J. Yu says that, to encourage shoppers



to use the tote bags, the contents of each bag are given double points in the Shopwise card. This translates to freebies for members who get to amass enough points.

"Everybody has to get involved," says RSI president Bienvenido 'Don-

nie' Tantoco, referring to environmental problems the world is facing today.

There has been increasing concern over the sad state of the world, with climate changes brought on by the greenhouse effect.

HOW/83-3

Christmas is a time for merrymaking and lots of... but it's a the most times of The endle list, the buying g anxiety crowded all con create st life. T before the r gettin regist read help you hol su

Wise tips to beat mas rush

TO DO:

- Finish X'mas shopping
- Look for party costume!!!
- Wine for X'mas party
- Go to the bank

Create a Christmas budget

For many of us, after-effects Christmas inclu huge credit ci bills that can te many months settle. But Christi doesn't need to t pain in the pock you plan ahead early as you create a ro budget of antic Christmas c Include in budget all the you're plann

buy, plus "hidden" expenses such as possible. It will also shop during remind them of your unexpected gifts help if you set a weekdays, love throughout the and overseas limit on the costs of preferably in the year.

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The mighty pen that could (almost) do it all

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

IF ONLY I HAD THIS PEN BACK in my school days. I remember way back then that we had to write everything on a notebook or use a typewriter if the teacher wanted to receive a more presentable written report.

Schoolchildren these days are more fortunate considering that apart from computers and desktop printers, they could now have this high tech pen called Fly Fusion Pentop computer.

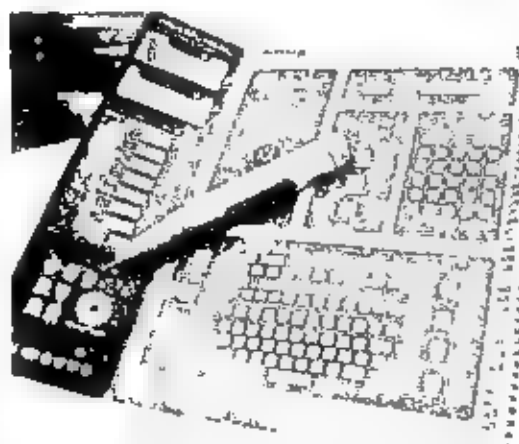
Manufactured by LeapFrog Enterprises, a leading developer of technology-based learning products based in California (distributed here by Ban Kee Trading), the Fly Fusion Pentop computer may look like any other conventional writing instrument except that this device could actually convert one's handwriting into digital documents that could then be e-mailed, printed, or saved.

Great news

Indeed, the Fly Fusion Pentop computer is great news for students and to some extent professionals who take notes on a regular basis.

With this device, they no longer have to encode their handwritten notes or carry a laptop or a tablet PC to school or work, if they have one.

The pen will allow them to store several pages of digitized text, which they could later



THE PEN'S control panel is located at the back of the notebook's front cover.

upload to a PC computer (via a mini USB port located at the top of the pen).

The Fly Fusion Pentop computer and its accompanying software are currently compatible with Windows XP and Vista (won't work with Mac, unfortunately).

Works with a partner notebook

Apart from the software and the mini USB cable (for transferring files and charging the pen's battery), a Fly Fusion Pentop computer will only work with a partner writing medium called Fly Fusion Notebook (an extra would cost P799.75).

This ordinary looking 48-page notebook is actually covered with millions of tiny, imperceptible dots that are scanned by a camera near the pen's tip, letting the pen track and remember exactly what you're writing, draw-

ing or even doodling.

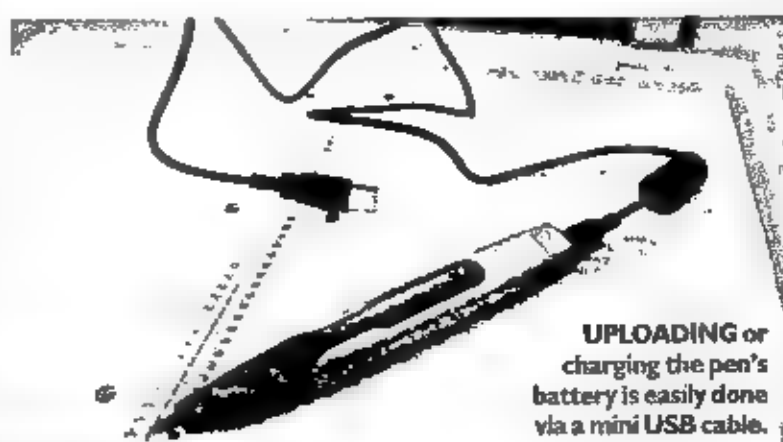
By the way, this camera is quite sensitive so it is advised to keep your fingers clear of its lenses and always hold it near the paper's surface to prevent the pen from powering off unexpectedly.

Also, when you write on the Fly Fusion Notebook, just remember to write legibly, that is, there should be space between letters.

And once uploaded and converted into a Microsoft Word Document, the software's Flyctionary also has spell-check, dictionary and thesaurus features in case you need to revise.

64MB

And don't worry about running out of memory while in the middle of taking notes since the pen is equipped with a 64MB mem-



THE PARTNER notebook

UPLOADING or charging the pen's battery is easily done via a mini USB cable.

CAMERA is located near the pen's retractable tip.

ory chip that should be enough for recording pages and pages of documents or dictations.

Otherwise, the user could buy a 64 MB Fly Fusion Memory Expansion Cartridge (sold separately), which should be more than enough to record tons of notes as well as accommodate several MP3 file downloads (yes, this pen could also store and play music via a built-in speaker).

And there's more to this pen than just recording text and MP3. The Fly Fusion Pentop computer can also do simple math calculations, offer homework help, create virtual flash cards, carry out basic language translation, and even record and play music.

Control panel

In order to operate these other functions, the front and back cover of the Fly Fusion Notebook is equipped with a control panel (located at the back page of the front cover) and a Mu-

sic Studio application (located at the back cover) that the user could tap using the pen's retractable tip.

The control panel lets you set reminders, use a calculator, play MP3s, browse through other available applications, or just get help. The Music Studio, on the other hand, could play and record music.

The user could also choose from a variety of FLY Fusion software (sold separately) that offers step-by-step help in challenging subject areas such as math, algebra, writing, as well as Spanish and French translation in addition to a host of fun applications like games and music creation.

For P7,999.75, it is a must-have for today's generation of schoolchildren who rely on the latest technologies for learning support and homework guidance.

Samsung offers slimmest camera phone

By Raquel P. Gomez

THE RACE FOR THE ULTIMATE CAMERA phone never seems to cease as major mobile phone brands keep coming out with higher megapixel cameras to upstage one another almost on a monthly basis.

Major mobile phone provider Samsung keeps up with the rapid race by coming out with the slimmest 5-megapixel full-featured handset and, as part of a promotional pitch, allowing professional Filipino photographers to have their way with the device.

Five up and coming professional photographers have taken Samsung's SGH-G600 in lieu of their DSLR cameras to take photos with demanding themes. Ronnie Salvacion comes out with "Flash Night" for nighttime photography, Paolo Pineda has "The Red Dot," or photos with classic movies inspiration; Jake Versoza has "Street Portraits," or slices of life in Binondo, Noelle Hernandez takes on "Secret City," or photos of fleeting moments in Beijing, China; and Steve Tirona has "Urban Runway," snapshots of street culture, lifestyle and philosophy.

With the new SGH G600, a slider camera phone only 14.9 mm thin, Samsung is promoting the idea that regular mobile phone users can actually experience a measure of professional photography using the 5-megapixel camera phone.

Samsung is also floating the idea that even professional photographers, whose standards for photos are way above others, will still love to dabble with the SGH-G600.

"The viewfinder mode is very useful, especially for beginners, since it gives the basic principles of photographic composition," says Salvacion.

"It's my first time to do a series of photos using just a camera phone, and I was impressed with the camera's high resolution," says Pineda.

"This camera phone is discreet. You can capture moments as they happen without people actually noticing," says Versoza.

"It's easy to use and navigate through its features. I also admire the settings which I could play around with, and the pictures do come out clearer," says Hernandez.

"For a camera phone, the images are surprisingly clear," says Tirona.

But why would the SGH G600 claim such a high standard for a camera phone?

Let's look at its insides and find out.

As a full featured 2.5G handset, the SGH G600 has standard features found in other phones in the same market niche, such as MP3 player that plays multiple music formats, Music Library, NetFront Browser V3.4, which provides PC-like browser capabilities, Bluetooth V2.1, a microSD slot that can accommodate up to 2Gig microSD card, and 2.2" QVGA TFT display capable of displaying 16M colors.

Now as a fully equipped 5 megapixel camera, the phone features the High Sensitive Shot, which equips the phone with a light sensitive ISO 800 image sensor that stabilizes the image, thereby compensating for shaky hands or lack of a tripod. It also minimizes the blur in a low-light situation, eliminating visual noise, which results in a clearer, more precise image on par with stand-alone digital cameras.

As to the capability of lighting subjects, the SGH G600 has the Power LED that emits a flash powerful enough to light objects at distances of up to two meters away. With this feature, the camera phone provides greater visibility of subjects, which means you can capture shots even in indoor environments, dusk, and night exteriors.

Intuitive Camera feature allows for faster operation of shots, while Various Shot Mode provides selection from a variety of creative imaging options. Panorama Shot stitches together photos from end to end to help you create long horizontal image or panoramic view.

Samsung SGH G600 is capable of Macro Shots, allowing for clear magnified focus on the smallest detail, while Mosaic Shot stitches together multiple rows of various photos in collage frame for interesting perspective.

It also has an Image Editor that incorporates multiple effects such as text color, cartoon or negative image, without affecting image size or quality.

It also features White Balance that corrects the color balance of photos to create more natural looking images.

And like the rest of the digital cameras out there, the device has a PictBridge and Bluetooth standard for printing purposes.

SGH G600, covered in aluminum metal mount, and coming in black, chrome silver and silver black colors, has indeed sealed the expectation and even upped the ante for the 5-megapixel camera phone market.

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See Promoter for details.

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Exec works and plays with gizmo

CALL CENTERS HAVE BEEN rightfully called the country's sunrise industry with reported revenues of \$3.5 billion this year. The busy executives behind them are shining the light on our workforce of world-class professionals. No one knows that better than Marife Zamora, who has led one particular operation leap from 0 to over 11,000 employees in just four years.

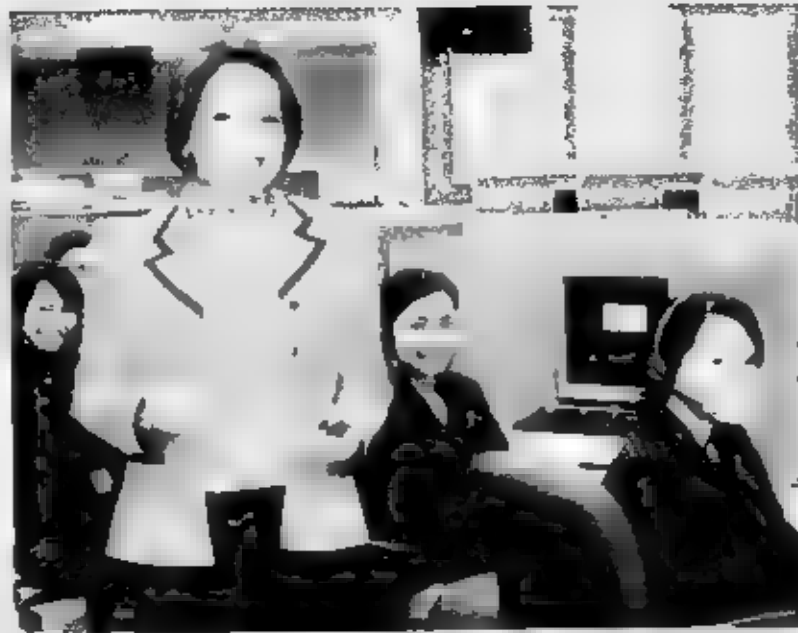
Zamora is vice president and country manager of Convergys, the global leader in customer care, human resources and billing services with clients in more than 70 countries. She oversees operations of nine sites across Metro Manila, Cebu, and soon, Bacolod City.

Contrary to perception, this top call center exec rises by mid-morning for a prayer of thanksgiving, closely followed by a peek into her Sony Ericsson P1i. This fifth-generation smartphone from Sony Ericsson's P-series is Zamora's own handy and mobile contact center, keeping her in touch with global operations and local happenings via e-mails and text messages even while she sleeps.

"Always being connected while on the move is a normal part of my working life," says Zamora.

The Sony Ericsson P1i represents some of the best features of its predecessors: Push e-mail, WiFi connectivity, document editors, speedy Net browsing, VoIP support, multimedia entertainment, remote access to e-mails and personal information management data, business card scanning and others, all streamlined in a new, slimmer design. Yet Sony Ericsson has packed in a 3.2-megapixel camera; a credible media player; FM radio, RSS feeds, 3D games, and even mobile TV capability into the new P1i.

The P1i remains by her side even during breakfast. "My P1i



MARIFE Zamora with her constant assistant, her e-mail-enabled Sony Ericsson P1i

has to be next to me even while I'm eating since I list my food intake on my phone's document file manager," she says. "I watch what I eat. I've gone through diet phases like everyone else."

Her business appointments typically begin after lunch. On the go, her P1i becomes an indispensable companion. "I use waiting and traveling time to make phone calls and notes. I get some of my best ideas on the road and do a lot of web browsing over my phone," she says.

As a constant assistant, her e-mail-enabled P1i lets her handle corporate and personal e-mails, contacts, and calendar wherever she is. "I can e-mail at a much faster rate than I would expect from a regular phone," she says. "Thank God for mobile e-mail! I used to sneak off from precious family moments just to launch Outlook," she adds.

Zamora's appointments vary from delivering speeches on the industry's economic benefits, to meeting local government officials for the rollout of more English proficiency programs. Reading and checking docu-

ments are done on the fly, or over her P1i, which offers document viewing and editing for Word, Excel and Powerpoint.

"I love the P1i for doing away with the need to collect business cards. I just take a scan of the card and the contact details are transferred directly into my phone book," says Zamora. "Its camera also takes great shots at 3.2 megapixels. It's a useful tool for work."

Zamora relies on her network for real-time, personal communication. But urgent e-mails are reason enough to call immediately.

"I believe you should respond to e-mails with a phone call when someone is upset, to avoid misunderstandings. Thirty seconds after they hit the send button, you already called to deal with it. It will also help you to communicate your intentions via your audible tone of voice. It makes a lot of difference," she adds.

"Think of this as my contribution to boosting digital intelligence. Academic researchers and technical writers all agree

that the shortest distance between two minds is a live conversation. Nothing beats it," she says.

Once in the Makati corporate headquarters, Zamora sits down to teleconferences with colleagues and clients in the United States. These can extend until the early hours of the morning. But the proud mother of two young IT professionals keeps in touch with them through calls home.

"Most of what I do are good management practices at any company. The difference here is the speed at which things are done, and the speed at which the company is growing," she notes.

Zamora unwinds to Humphrey Bogart uttering his immortal, "Here's looking at you, kid," in Casablanca on her home theater. To end her day, she dozes off to music by Brahms.

Aside from this classic composer on her P1i's music play list, Zamora has listened to everything Sting has done. "And I love Led Zeppelin and Cream, too," the executive admits.

For further downtime, she enjoys five things on the Internet. "I find. I buy. I pay. I share and look for entertainment and content. I want to find stuff. I am crazy about Hermes bags. eBay, amazon.com and shopnzip.com are some of my favorite sites." Seek in the web, and you shall find in the web indeed.

Music and speed walking are among her stress busters, but work for her is never really work. "When I took over here, I set about my work with my usual mixture of know-how and curiosity. But I also listened to my superiors and colleagues in headquarters who have been in this business for a long time and conferred closely with them. Since then, 11,000 of the country's best and brightest have ushered Convergys from start-up to a powerhouse."

How a bag can help ...

From page B3-1

"If we don't do something now, it is going to be a disaster," Tantoco states. "And we can't say that other people should take care of the problem."

He says in deciding as a company to do something about the environment, they realize the customers have to be involved too.

"When you serve customers, you add the element of what to do that helps the situation where we use plastics," Tantoco says.

Apart from reusable bags, the firm is also helping the World Wildlife Fund by donating a portion of its sales proceeds from cer-

tain products to the Fund.

Shopwise's marketing head Frances Yu adds that they will also help in educating the customers on certain issues via programs that will be aired on plasma TV sets in the stores.

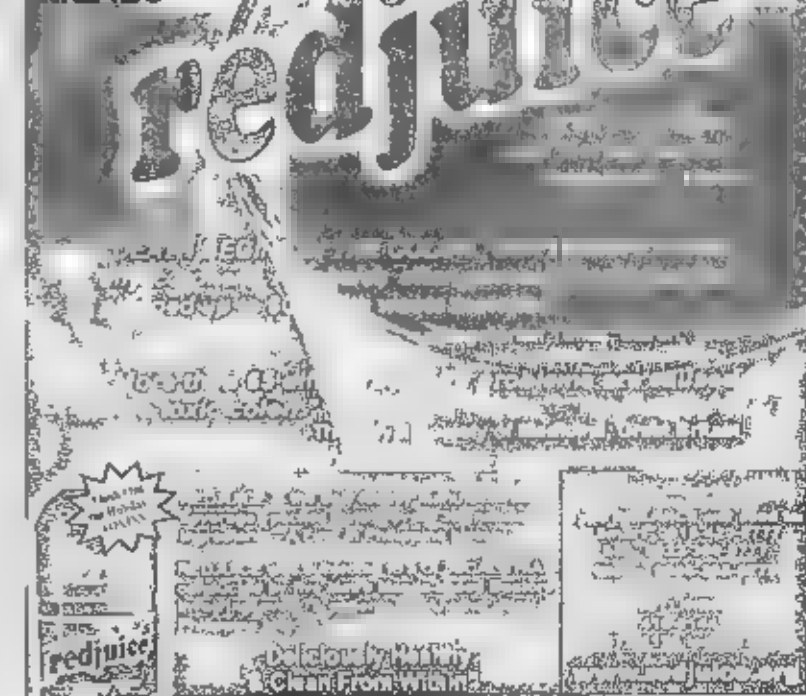
Yu points out that consumers these days are already aware of the environment and are very health conscious.

This is why Shopwise is beefing up on its "environmentally safe products"—goods that do not contain materials potentially harmful to the environment.

"Customers nowadays read the labels," she says.

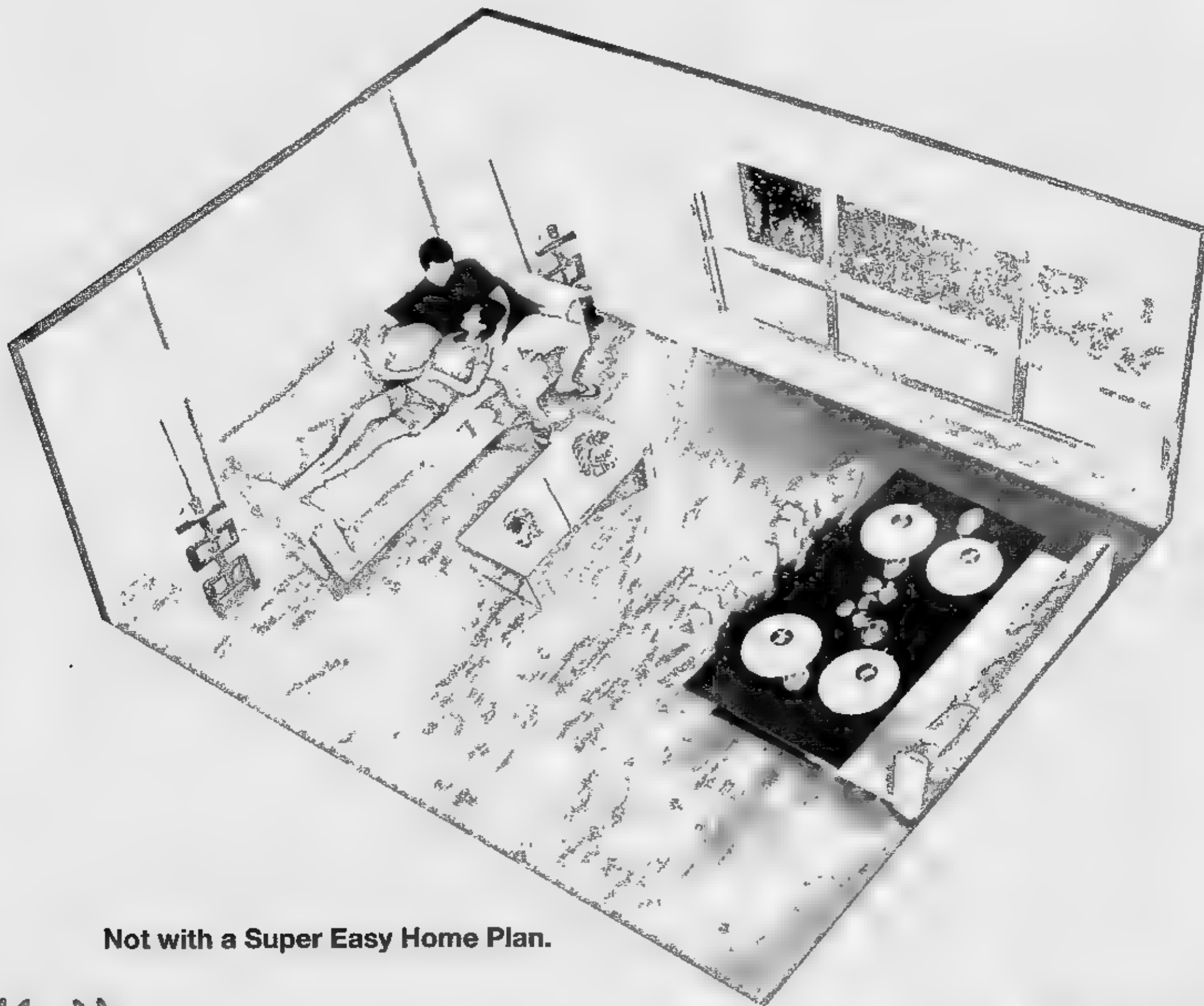


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IN THIS ISSUE

■ The best of theater
in 2007 / D1

LIFESTYLE

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BANAUE Rice Terraces

We're doing well in protecting our heritage

PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

THE PHILIPPINES RECEIVED a hearty thumbs-up from international heritage luminaries for its heritage-conservation efforts.

"The future of the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordillera is in good hands," declared Marc de Caraffe from the International Council for Monuments and Sites (Icomos) of Canada.

De Caraffe is also the president of the international organization's Committee on Vernacular (Traditional) Architecture.

Signifying support for heritage conservation in the country, United States Ambassador Kristie Kenney through the US Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation supported the meeting but also personally traveled to Banaue to address the meeting and visit the terraces as well.

Icomos is a Paris-based NGO that regulates professional heritage-conservation activities worldwide and is the official adviser to the Unesco World Heritage Committee on cultural-heritage issues.

For the first time, international heritage luminaries joined members of Icomos Philippines in Banaue last week. The meeting coincided with the 12th anniversary of the inscription of five rice-terraces clusters in Ifugao in the prestigious Unesco World Heritage List as "The Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordillera."

Seven years later, the site was transferred to the World Heritage in Danger List, signifying that conservation measures should be intensified to prevent the site from further decay. This led to Unesco and Philippine experts agreeing on a set of measures to rehabilitate the site.

In danger

Respected international specialists arrived from Mexico, Argentina, United States, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Japan and Korea to join their Philippine counterparts to meet on "Protecting Endangered Traditional Landscapes," focusing on the current status of the five terraces clusters in Ifugao.

The "In Danger" designation simply means conservation measures for a site on the World Heritage List must be stepped up to prevent its rapid deterioration.

The meeting agreed that the five rice-terraces clusters in Ifugao, Benguet, Hapao, Nagacadan and May-

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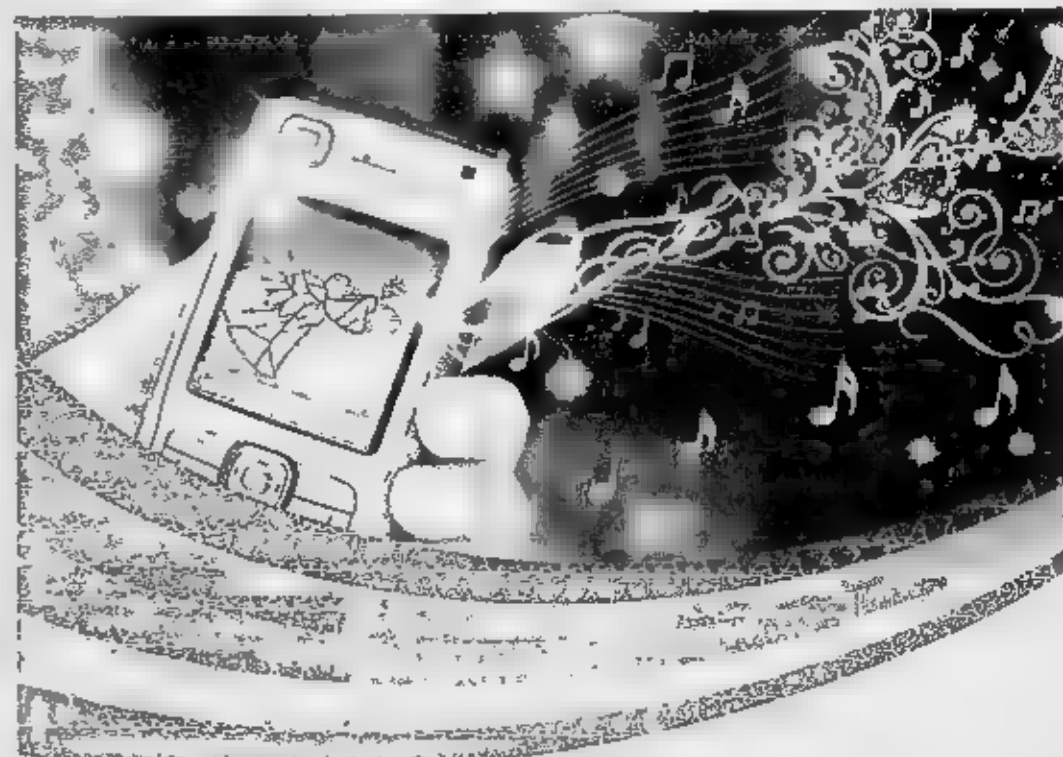
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Joy to the World	XMASPT7

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Globe

Svenson saved my hair!

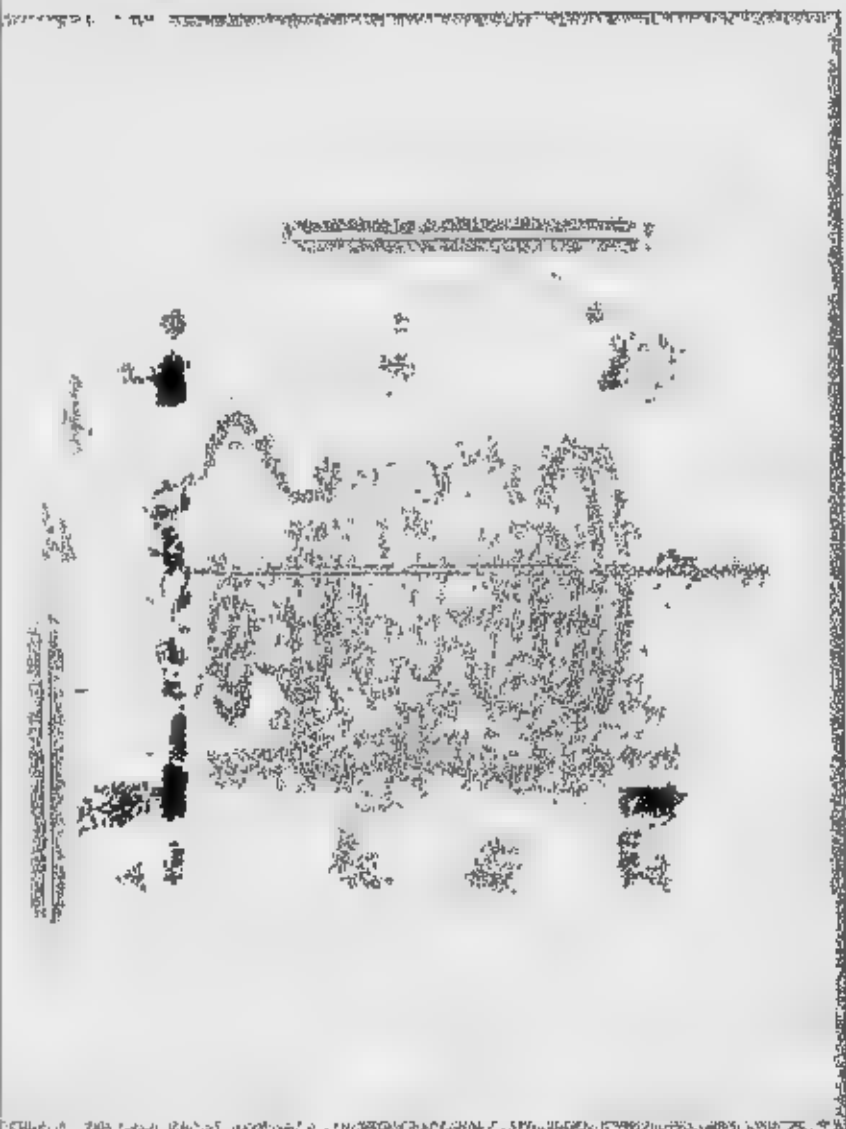
Joey Marquez

For funnyman Joey Marquez, hair loss isn't something to laugh about. "I started losing my hair when I was about 35 years old," he recalls. "I was being called 'monsignor' because the bald cap! You look older with less hair. And nobody wants to look old. But I didn't want to wear a wig either. With the Svenson treatments, I got back my real, natural hair! It was thicker and healthier. It made me look absolutely younger! Svenson saved me from hair loss!"

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From page C1

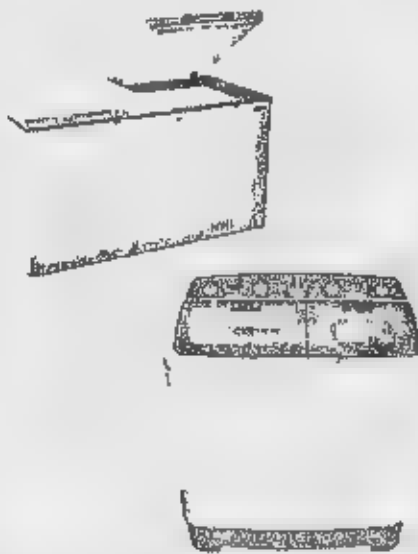
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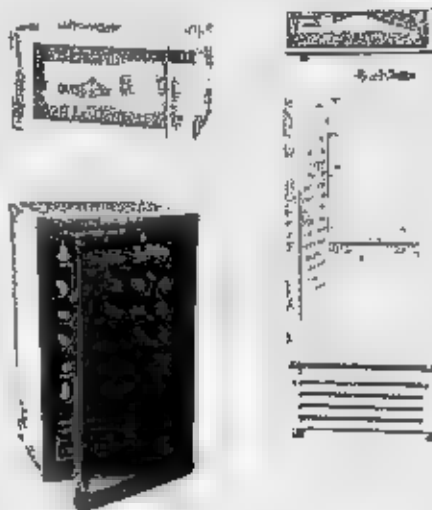
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Enigma of visuality

By Gary C. Devilles
Contributor

AS PEOPLE ARE BOMBARDED BY images from television screen and billboards, and a pervasive culture of visuality narrows their capacity to critically think, artists are the prophets in the proverbial wilderness, crying out for reevaluation and radical change.

Anna de Leon's second one-woman show, in 1/0f Gallery in Serendra, attempts

"BEYOND Comprehension" IX

to show this radical attitude through poetic juxtapositions, dramatic renditions of disjunctive objects, and mix media.

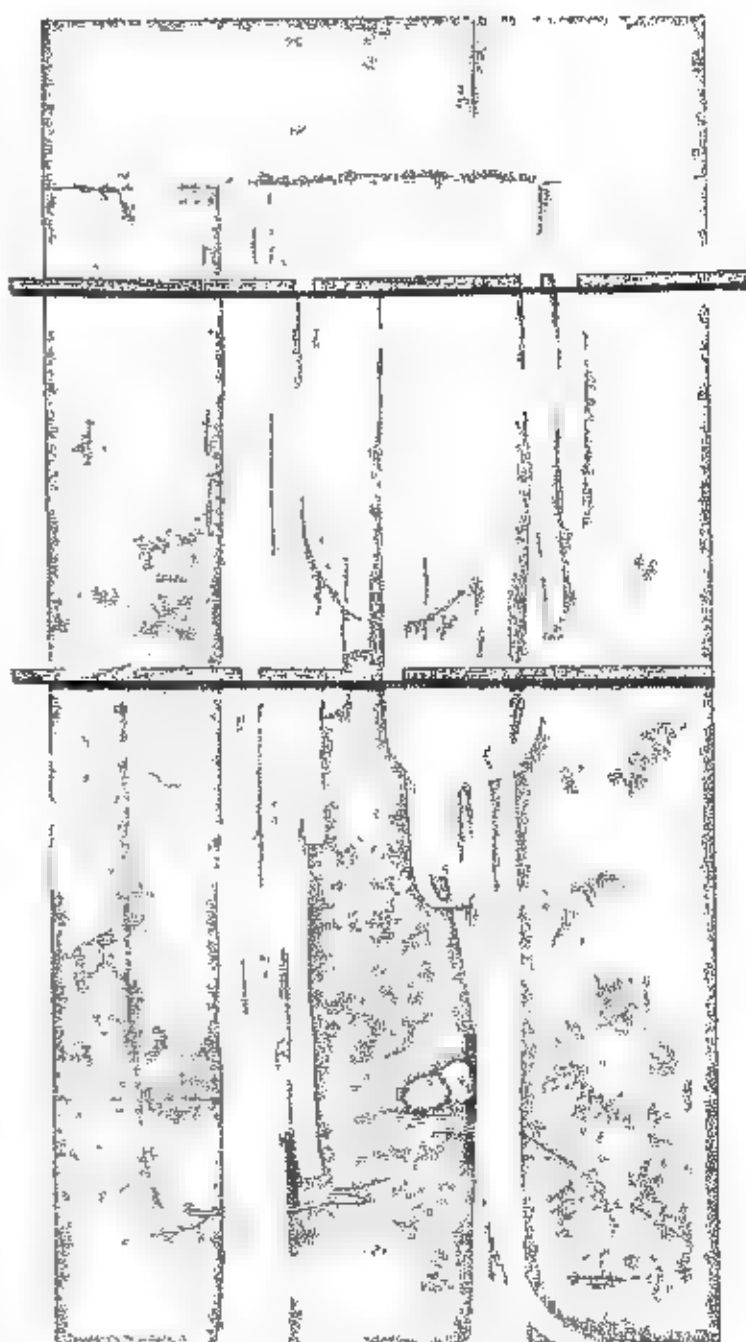
The title of the show, "Beyond Comprehension," may sound elitist and presumptuous, but for De Leon the artist is always in search of answers and contemplating on various issues and problems that beset themselves and society.

Hence, the title for De Leon is never a judgment on the inaccessibility of art production but a quiet reflection on the resistance inherent in art itself—art resisting interpretation and clamoring for more; art resisting to be categorized in a style or in a school of thought; and even perhaps art refusing to be commodified.

It is not unexpected then that De Leon's collection teems with limitless possibilities for introspection. In one piece, the foreground reveals strips of white, gauze-like fabric hanging from a thin wire with a single blue string hanging loose, and where on a corner of the floor rest two quail eggs. Can this be another playful rendition of Nature against man/woman, as the fabric is definitely man/woman-made and the eggs are part of nature?

Such theme has always fascinated artists from time immemorial, and De Leon is no stranger in this dichotomy as she herself as an artist reckons with transcending her nature, cognizant of the fact that society today seems to offer no place for many artists like her.

How many artists are discouraged to take up Fine Arts, Music, Creative Writing, or even Journalism, knowing that the only way to survive in a so called fast-paced world is by taking up Engineering, Computer Education, and Nursing? How do we really care for our indigenous artists? What incentives do we give to the young so they are encouraged to study and pursue careers on the arts?



"BEYOND Comprehension" I

It seems the litany of frustrations will show that we have been contradicting our nature such that the eggs depicted in these collections become an indictment also of our stunted growth and the strings and fabric become the meaningless gestures that fail to cohere or be woven into a seamless political will.

Anna de Leon may show us the promise that awaits us for those in the forefront who live and fight against meaninglessness. But she also warns us how her art can become a poor refuge for our defamed humanity.



"BEYOND Comprehension" III

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BEST OF THEATER 2007

Bravo!

By Gibbs Cadiz

BY RIGHT, 2007 SHOULD have been a red-letter year for local theater.

Repertory Philippines and the Philippine Educational Theater Association (Peta), the two most established and consistent professional drama companies in the country, marked their 40th anniversary this year.

Between them, they have racked up a

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Here's the cream of the crop of Manila theater in 2007—shows and performances worth celebrating any time

MICHAEL Williams, Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo and Joaquin Valdes in the New Voice Company production of Stephen Sondheim's "Into the Woods," directed by Rito Asilo

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CLASSICAL guitarist Alvaro Pierri (center) backstage with guitar convert Elisa Salapantan and Julie Yap Daza



CONCERT organizer Eddie Yap



SOPRANO Rachelle Gerodias



PIANIST Ilya Rashkovskiy (left) with fans backstage at Philamlife Theater

Standing ovations for Pierri, Rashkovskiy

By Pablo Tariman, Contributor

CLASSICAL GUITARIST ALVARO Pierri and pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy got standing ovations for their Manila concerts.

Pierri's performance galvanized the guitar community of Metro Manila as guitar teachers and students from the UST Conservatory of Music, Sta. Isabel Music Department, St. Scholastica's College Music Department, and UP College of Music, among others, flocked to the concert.

Pierri didn't just perform for the guitar aficionados; he had a dialogue with them on the eve of his performance at Grappas Restaurant (dinner courtesy of Bonjin Bolinao and guitar student Maan Montiveros).

Pierri was given a post-concert reception at Bistro Remedios (courtesy of Larry Cruz and Gemma Cruz Araneta). Later, he was again given a standing ovation by guitar teachers and students at Café Adriatico. The meeting was part-dialogue and part-masterclass, and showed how far-reaching the interest for classical guitar is.

Julie Yap Daza praised the musician "Pierri played the guitar like a baby, strumming tenderly, making each string vibrate like silk, making what little hair I had on my arm stand in ecstasy!"

As for Rashkovskiy, there was no doubt he eclipsed his 2006 Manila debut performance with his new Manila program inspired by dance.

Odette Alcantara said she could hear four pianos when she closed her eyes to hear Liszt's "Mephisto" Waltz and "Bodje."

Mimi Sison, who hosted a midnight treat for the Russian pianist after the performance, said the pianist just got better and better.

Moved by overwhelming audience response, Rashkovskiy told me: "What will happen to those audiences if you say goodbye to concert-organizing?"

My heartfelt thanks to the Philippine American Life Insurance Company and Manila Pavilion for helping me keep classical music alive in the last three years. The Great Performance Series was conceived and realized with very little resources.

Art and music at Bellissimo

With guitar and flute music in the background, and with the eminent Behn Cervantes as moderator, the dialogue with artists who had other callings was held during the recent opening of "Dolce Vita," a group exhibition at Bellissimo Restorante in Quezon City.

The artists were led by actor Cesar Montano and included Arnel Ignacio, Grandier Bella, Florence Cinco, Jes Evangelista, Norlie Membran and Raul Roco Jr.

It's foregone conclusion is that photorealist Bella, mixed-media painter Cinco, abstractionist Evangelista, expressionist Membran and surrealist Roco do their art for the sheer pleasure of it. But what do actors and TV personalities get when they dabble in art?

Ignacio said painting gave him relief from the commercialism of television and time to realize there is more to living than just entertaining TV audiences.

"When I paint," he said, "I forget about the madness of TV ratings. I just become myself and express other profound realities outside of television. Painting gives me another high and a fulfillment outside the world of entertainment intrigues."

Montano said painting gave him a fulfillment better than acting and singing.

"At the end of the day, it's just you and

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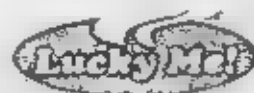


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IT ALL STARTED 29 YEARS ago, when the faculty of Bauan High School (BHS) in Batangas, headed by engineer Vicente Cordero, was alarmed by the increasing criminal activities involving teenagers in schools. So the group tried to encourage students to develop their artistic abilities through the Parulan (lantern-making) contest.

Today, the BHS continues the tradition by encouraging its students to use indigenous organic materials such as betel and banga nuts, rice, corn husks, fish scales, citrus fruits, pistachio shells, cigarettes, garlic, matches, *guyabano* and *alibangbang* leaves, coconut tree, *palotsina* and *alum* wood, plastic strings, bottles.

Each material used was carefully cleaned, dried, diced, scrapped, soaked, glued, and cut to form intricately designed flower petals or buds, leaves, mosaic, coupled with flickering and sparkling lights to give birth to exquisite and unique Christmas lanterns.

The BHS lanterns are a testament to the creativity and skill of the Filipino youth.

This year, 12 winning creations will be displayed at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Little Theater Lobby starting Dec. 18, during the Paskong Pinoy celebration at the CCP.

The top three lanterns crafted out of rice grains and hay, citrus fruits and garlic won the BHS Parol Festival this year.

Admission to the exhibit is free. For more information, call the CCP Visual Arts Division at 8321125 loc. 1504-1505



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'Sherds,' new Sionil José novel, is off the press

THE UNIQUE TITLE OF NATIONAL ARTIST F Sionil José's newest novel, as defined by the Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, are fragments of pottery found in sites where pottery-making peoples have lived.

Its main character, belongs to the oligarchic family, the Golangcos. The first Golangco in F Sionil José's sprawling gallery of literary characters appears in one of his early novels, "Gagamba."

The original Golangcos were two brothers who came to the Philippines in the 1850s from Pookien, China. The older brother settled in Binondo, learned the Governor-General's "tong" (protection money) collector in Manila's Chinese community.

The younger Golangco settled in the Central Plains, traded in rice and became an hacendero.

PG (Peter Gregory) in this novel belongs to the fourth generation of this clan. He is completely detached from the family businesses. He is an artist, a potter and scholar, a sybarite and cosmopolitan with a doctorate in aesthetics. He is a tenured professor at the University of California in Berkeley but elects to return to the Philippines to teach at the urging of another Filipino-Chinese, Betty Sy, a former student.

Into his seminar class, a freshman comes. She is tall, talented, combative. A tenacious teacher-pupil relationship starts, develops and culminates in an unexpected ending.

"Sherds" is, perhaps, Sionil José's most thoughtful and incisive comment on the Filipino condition. For all its sophisticated urban setting, it still belongs to the vernacular literary tradition, hewing closely to the author's major theme—the Filipino's often hopeless search for social justice and a moral order.

F Sionil José's fiction is now translated into 28 languages. In 1980, he received the

Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Award for Literature. In 2001, he was named National Artist for Literature, and in 2004, he re-

ceived from the government of Chile the Pablo Neruda Centennial Award for Literature.



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Ateneo de Manila wins TV debate

ATENEO DE MANILA University's debate team is set to compete in the World Universities Debating Championship (Worlds) this month.

It won the right to represent the country after beating Ateneo De Zamboanga University in the finals of the Philippine Debate Championship aired on ANC's "Square Off."

In the finals, winning Atenean debaters Sharmilah Parmanand and Charisse Borromeo argued that allowing media to air news on terrorism would only elevate the terrorists' status.

But Al Zhoheir Hajim and Henry Segovia of Ateneo Davao argued that the media reports were needed so that the public would know the "enemy."

Despite a well-thought-of rebuttal by the opposition, adjudicators sided with ADMU in the end because of clear and precise presentation of arguments and a better grasp of language.

ADMU won P20,000 in cash, trophies, and will become one of the country's representatives to the World Universities Debating Championship on Dec. 27-Jan. 5, 2008 in Thailand. Ateneo would be sponsored by the Philippine Graphic.

Aside from Graphic, sponsors include the Ramon Magsaysay Foundation, Philippine Stock Exchange, Megaworld, Thai Airways, Chowking, Victory Liner, SGV Foundation, and Ferdinandina.

Celebrate the Festive Season at Cebu City's finest

In Cebu, the most magical place to be in this Festive Season is the Marco Polo Plaza. Celebrate the Festive Season at Cebu City's finest!

CHRISTMAS COUNTDOWN

Christmas Carols in the Lobby, 16-23 December, 6:00 PM
The angelic voices of various choirs fill the atrium with classic Christmas carols.

Christmas Eve Dinner, 24 December, 7:00 PM
Your choice of venue for a festive Christmas buffet dinner. Whether it's at Café Marco, El Viento or the Grand Ballroom, you and your family will delight in the sumptuous cuisine Marco Polo Plaza is famous for. Dynamic Latin band Caliente performs at El Viento while Interact plays salsa music at the Ballroom. All buffet dinners at P1,108.00 net/person.

Christmas Eve Mass, Grand Ballroom, 24 December, 10:00 PM
Midnight Mass under the stars. Featuring a live re-enactment of the Nativity scene. Also featuring the Metrobank Cebu Choir.

Noche Buena, Café Marco, 24 December, 11:30 PM
The traditional way of celebrating Christmas Eve with a Filipino style merienda buffet. P370.00 net/person.

Christmas Day Brunch, Café Marco, 25 December, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Wake up early on Christmas Day and let Café Marco treat you and your family to all the holiday culinary delights you've been dreaming of. P1,108.00 net/person.

NEW YEAR'S COUNTDOWN

Revelry on 31 December starts at 7:30 PM
It's all happening at the Marco Polo Plaza Cebu on New Year's Eve! Welcome 2008 with a delightful buffet dinner anywhere at the hotel and enjoy complimentary entrance to the Grand Ballroom for the New Year's Countdown and spectacular fireworks display.

Café Marco and El Viento, P1,198.00 net/person.

Garden Terrace, Featuring the Caliente Band. P1,588.00 net/person.

Grand Ballroom, International artist Anna Fegi entertains over dinner, followed by the versatile Firestones & The Gang for all-night dancing. P1,209.00 net/person.

Grand Ballroom, Entertainment starts at 11:00 PM by the Soul Mafia, with countdown, fireworks and all-night dancing under the stars. P588.00 net/person for walk-ins. Includes glass of sparkling wine.

Purchase 10 New Year's Eve dinner tickets and get one (1) free! Offer valid only for Garden Terrace and Grand Ballroom buffet dinners.

New Year's Day Brunch, Café Marco, 1 January 2008, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
Start the year with a festive brunch at Café Marco. P1,108.00 net/person.

FESTIVE SEASON ROOM PACKAGES

Enjoy family togetherness this Festive Season with special room rates from December 23, 2007 to January 2, 2008 for local residents starting at only P3,800.00 net per night, inclusive of breakfast. Those staying for two nights or longer get fabulous discounts.

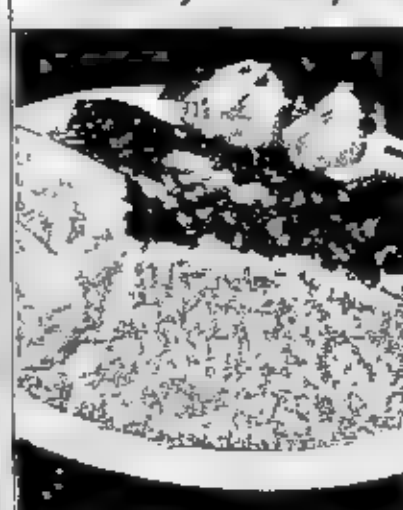
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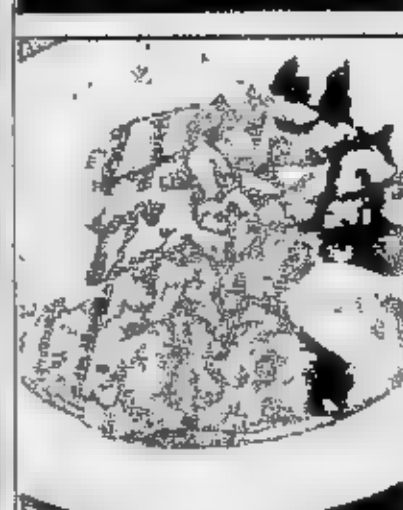


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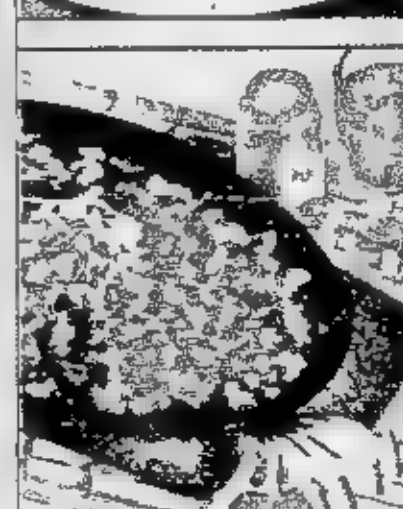


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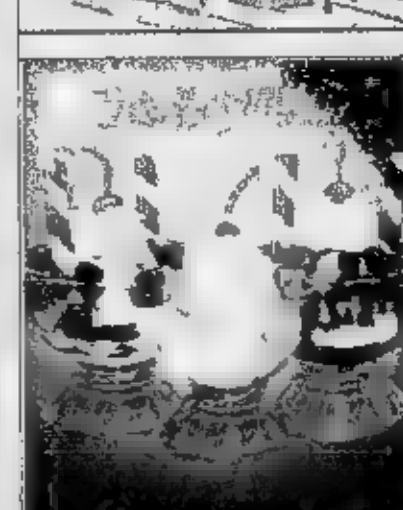
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UST holds traditional Paskuhan

THE UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS will hold Paskuhan 2007 with the theme "Bagong Panahon: Paskol" on Dec. 19, at the UST Grandstand.

Paskuhan is the traditional Christmas celebration of the Pontifical University. It starts at 4 p.m. with the parade of students to the UST Grandstand, followed by the Panunuluyan, which depicts Mary and Joseph's search for an inn on Christmas night.

At 5:30 p.m., a High Mass will be celebrated by the Dominican community led by UST Rector Fr. Rolando V. de la Rosa, OP.

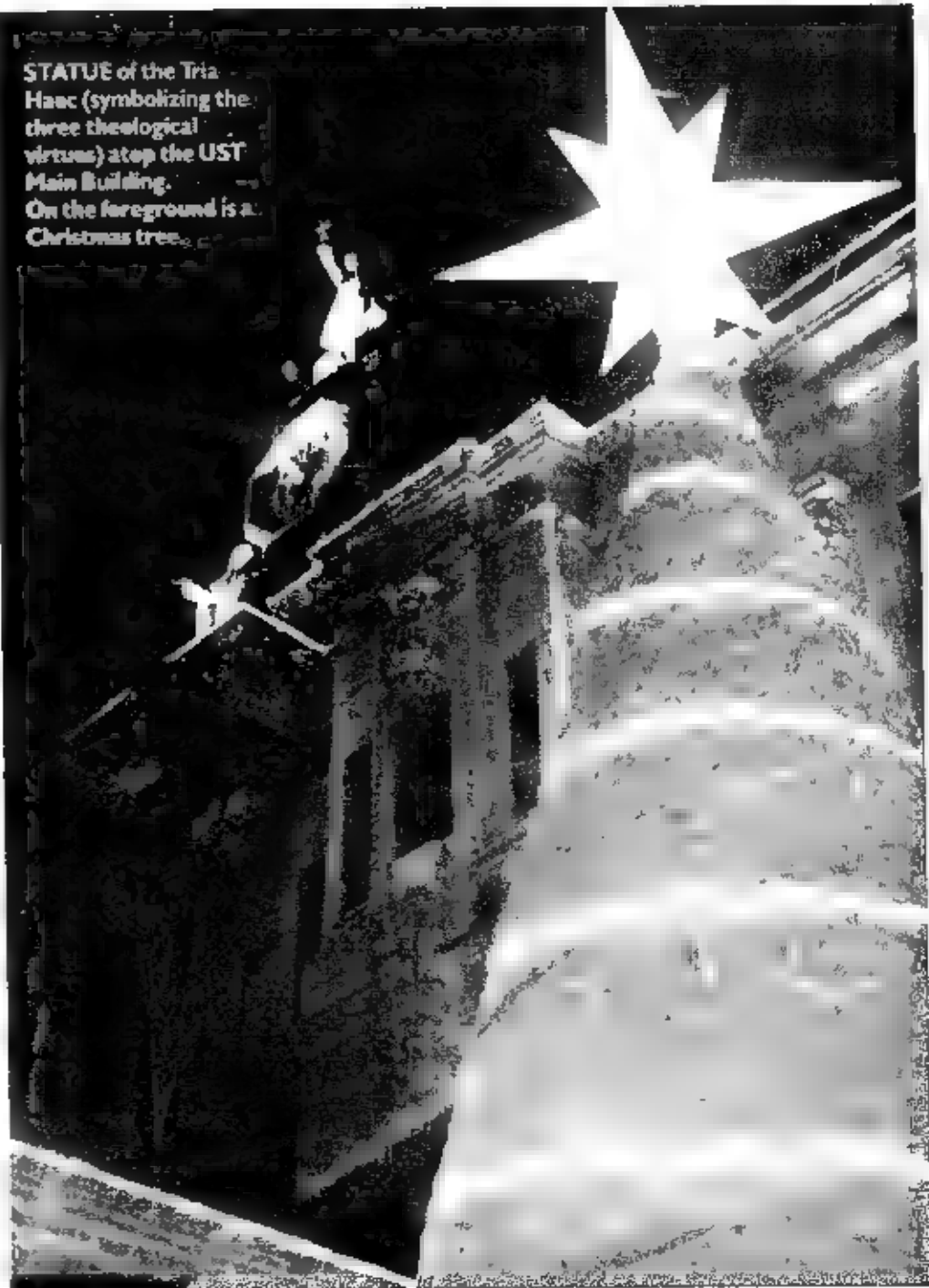
The offertory collection will go to the Community Outreach projects of the Office of Community Development. The Mass will be followed by the lighting of the giant Christmas tree and the traditional fireworks display.

More than 100 prizes will be raffled off.

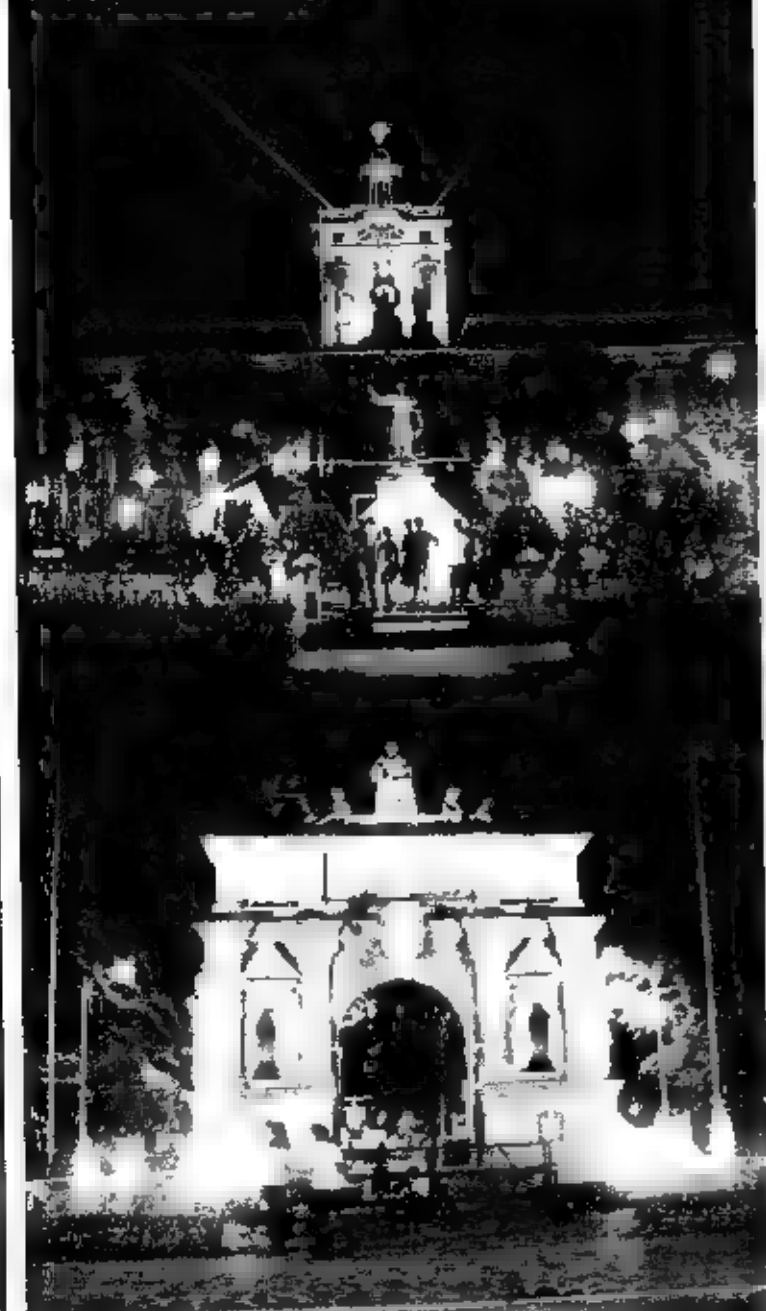


THE STATUE of UST founder, Archbishop Miguel de Benavides, is surrounded by geometric cubes as lanterns.

STATUE of the Tri-Haac (symbolizing the three theological virtues) atop the UST Main Building. On the foreground is a Christmas tree.



TWO beams are flashed across Manila from the UST Tower and Cross atop the UST Main Building.



THE FOOT of the Arch of the Centuries, the gate of the old UST in Intramuros, is adorned with Christmas lanterns designed along the line of the Dominican cross.



Artworks empathize with diabetics' sufferings

DOCTORS OF THE PHILIPPINE Diabetes Association (PDA) participated in a unique art competition—one that produced sketches/drawings, paintings and photography which empathized with the sufferings and portrayed the emotional journey of Type 2 diabetes patients.

The Designs on Diabetes National Art Competition was organized by the PDA in partnership with pharmaceutical firm Glaxo-SmithKline.

Diabetes is a silent killer that kills one person every 10 seconds. The reported death from diabetes-related causes has reached 3.8 million. The disease also accounts for over a million amputations annually.

A distinguished panel of judges chose nine artworks from a formidable field of entries. The winning artworks were exhibited during the 2007 PDA Annual Convention themed "Greater Heights in Diabetes Care" at the Century Park Hotel in Manila.

The doctors who created the artworks were recognized in a ceremony led by PDA president Dr. Tommy Ty Willing; GSK business unit director Andy Abarquez; and GSK-Avandia product manager Sheryl Pascual.

Two of the winning entries were titled "Pirang at Tanikala" by Dr. Sangumay Anulacion, and "Torment of Diabetes" by Dr. Allan Hernandez. The artworks portray the sufferings of Type 2 diabetes patients.

Anulacion explained poverty played a major role in the unabated growth incidence of diabetes.

"People take diabetes with lesser concern and interest because poverty had prevented a great number of diabetic patients from seeking proper medical attention. Many diabetics suffer in silence and keep their frustrations to themselves to avoid the financial and emotional burden that it will bring to their family."

Referring to his artwork, Hernandez explained a diabetic patient's life was a constant struggle to maintain the balance between good blood sugar control and preventing the risk of complications.

"These things weigh heavily on patients and their families in all aspects of their lives—emotionally, physically, financially and spiritually."

"To be diagnosed with the disease means a lifetime spent taking medications. It also means having your blood examined for sugar regularly."

The rest of the winning artworks are "In the Depth of Uncertainty" by Dr. Ceferno Rene Villareal, "Different Sides" by Dr. Danilo Baldemor, "Creeping Death" by Dr. Emmanuel Ruiz II, "Realizing a Diabetic's Dream" by Dr. Vanessa Conti, "Solitude" by Dr. Josierina Sarmiento, "Should Have Used the Stairs" by Dr. Werner Immscher, and "Facets and Phases" by Dr. Marcelyn Vinig.

The winning artworks are featured in the 2008 PDA calendar.

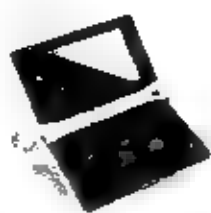


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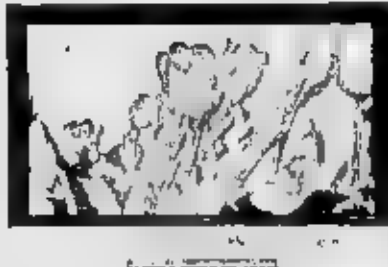
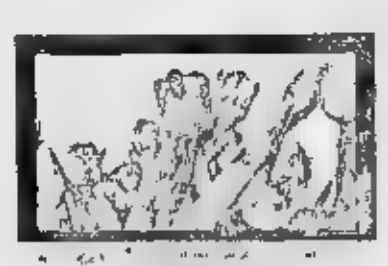
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Did You Know...

Rock and Roll Hall of Fame

CLEVELAND—MADONNA WAS ANNOUNCED as a Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee on Thursday, along with John Mellencamp, The Ventures, Leonard Cohen and The Dave Clark Five. A panel of 600 industry figures selected the five acts to be inducted at the annual rites, set March 10 in New York. **AP**



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METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2007



(INQUIRER Entertainment is running this MMFF guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema tour. The festival runs from Dec. 25 to Jan. 7, 2008.)

"Enteng Kabisote 4: Okay Ka, Fairy Ko (The Beginning of a Legend)"

M-Zet Productions/OctoArts Films
Stars: Vic Sotto, Kristine Hermosa, G Tongi, Dyo Sotto, Aiza Seguerra, Jose Manale, Ruby Rodriguez, Ian Veneracion, Francine Prieto, Michael de Mesa, Caridad Sanchez and Joey de Leon
Directed by Tony R. Reyes

We have followed the life of the kind-hearted and funny mortal named Enteng and his wife Faye—a fairy from the magical world of Engkantasya—and joined them in their adventures battling the evil Santana. This year, audiences will be watching a prequel to the first three "Enteng" movies. "This will help young viewers, who did not see the sitcom on TV in the '90s, understand the characters more," said lead actor Sotto.

ABS-CBN lists affected shows

By Marinel R. Cruz

ABS-CBN'S PRIME TIME SHOWS—THE early evening newscast "TV Patrol," the drama series "Walang Kapalit" and fantasy series "Kokey" have been particularly disadvantaged by "manipulated" TV ratings, according to a network executive.

The network on Wednesday filed a P63-million civil case against the survey firm AGB Nielsen for alleged rigging of ratings poll results.

Corporate Communications head Bong Osorio told INQUIRER Entertainment, however, that there has been no significant decrease in the ratings of the said shows, even in Bacolod where the reported cheating happened. "We are still the national leader," said Osorio. "But the gap [in viewership between ABS-CBN and closest rival GMA 7] would be wider if not for this."

Osorio related that on Nov. 20, the ABS-CBN station manager in Bacolod was sought out by a man who divulged attempts to "unnaturally influence" households where Nielsen had set up survey meters.

"We don't know why the informant [did that]. But he sounded credible and signed an affidavit," said Osorio, refusing to reveal the man's identity or affiliation.

Nielsen ignored a letter that ABS-CBN sent two weeks ago about the matter, added Osorio. "We asked what they intended to do," he said. "[Their response] presented no concrete course of action. So we went to court."

The Kapamilya network might conduct its own probe, Osorio said. "It could be happening nationwide."

Inevitably, the Kapamilya exec pointed out, this incident would diminish Nielsen's integrity as the industry's main ratings provider. "They have to shape up. If this is happening to the TV industry, it could happen to radio and print."

To observations that the "tampered" results seemed to favor rival network GMA 7, Osorio said. "The case is not against the other network but against AGB Nielsen."

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Revilla: Digital tech can help stop piracy

By Vincent Cabrera
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY has made film piracy a little harder to stop but the same technology has made producing films cheaper and can help bring down the cost of commercial entertainment, Sen. Ramon "Bong" Revilla Jr. said here.

Revilla, whose family owns Inmas Productions, said local movies and music albums are sometimes digitized and transmitted to film pirates through the Internet, making it difficult for law enforcers to trace sources.

But Philippine producers have also discovered that digital technology helped cut the usual costs

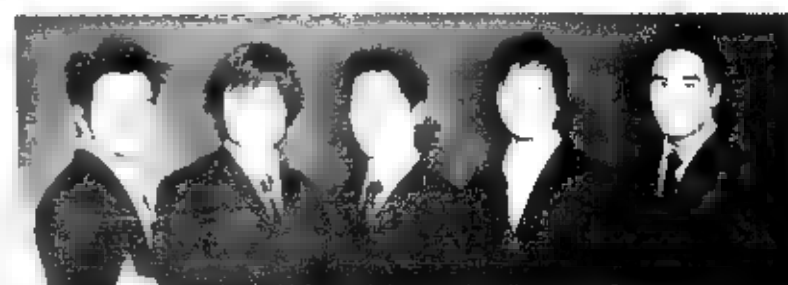
of producing movies, noted Revilla, a former chair of the Videogram Regulatory Board.

He said the government should help the industry access these forms of technology to make digital filmmaking more competitive, and help the mainstream producers make more affordable movies.

Revilla on Friday led the kick-off parade here of the Metro Manila Film Festival.

He said his entry, the science fiction film "Resklo," already uses high definition (HD) digital technology at far lower costs than previous years.

But moviegoers have not fully embraced small digital productions, he said. "Maybe these are not glossy enough for them."



SHOW TIME

ON SATURDAY, Dec. 22, the all-tenor group Angeles (above) performs in a special back-to-back show with the retro band Spirit of '67 (top) at Makati Shangri-La's Conway's Bar. Call 0910-3233734.

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2 ELIZABETH MTRCB PG-13 12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00	4 THE KINGDOM MTRCB GP 2:00, 9:30 DEATH PROOF MTRCB R-13 4:40, 7:05

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3 DEATHPROOF 1:50, 2:05, 4:20 6:35, 6:50	4 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 11:15, 2:00, 4:40 7:20, 10:00
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AT THE CINEMAS

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This film showing is dedicated in memory of Sally Camatay, one of the main leads, who was found dead on the streets of Dubai. Portion of the proceeds will go to Sally Camatay family.

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Sequels and prequels figure strongly in MMFF lineup

IN HOLLYWOOD, SEQUELS and prequels have proven to be very popular with viewers. Quite a number of hit movies have their plots extended into subsequent productions that benefit greatly from the original stories' initial success.

It's the "brand name" mentality carried over to filmmaking. A hit film is regarded as a popular product, so its title is in effect a brand that can continue to make money for its producer, from sequel to sequel—sometimes, with a couple of "prequels" thrown in for good measure.

Successful examples of film series abound. In the past, many "Tarzan," "Dracula," "Lassie," "Zorro," and "Rocky" sequels were made.

But their success has been roundly eclipsed by the bigger bucks that more recent movie series have earned. Like the "Harry Potter," "Lord of the Rings," "Star Wars," "Halloween" and "Back to the Future" films, which have made billions of dollars worldwide.

Thrice-told plots

Even if some sequels are inferior due to their thrice-told plots and exhausted stellar performances, a sufficient number of diehard fans continues to view them, so they still end up in the black.

So, even if many sequels and prequels get more than their share of criticism, they continue to be produced over and over again, because they are an easy sell, and enjoy great viewer "recall."

Expectedly, sequels have also become popular on the local movie scene with hit serial production like the "Ang Panday,"

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre



"Darna," "Dyesebel," "Shake, Rattle and Roll," "Mano Po" and "Enteng Kabisote" films.

Like their American counterparts, some local movie sequels have a hard time measuring up to the standard set by their initial films. This is particularly true of the thriller-chiller movie series, which have clearly seen better days.

Despite this, sequels dominate this year's Metro Manila Film Festival, with last year's front-runner, "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," following up with "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo," which focuses on lead star couple Judy Ann Santos and Ryan Agoncillo's characters' post-wedding bliss—and blues.

For his part, film fest favorite Vic Sotto is wrapping up work on a prequel to his hit "Enteng Kabisote" fantasy flicks. Titled "Enteng Kabisote 4," the movie nevertheless "starts from the very beginning" in terms of plotting the initial links forged between its human and magical characters. Sotto and Kristine Hermosa star.

And "Shake, Rattle and Roll 9" features three spooky episodes starting a multigenerational mix of veteran and young leads and supporting players.

Last year, "Enteng" and "Kasal" fought it out for top grosser spot in the film fest, and the same "duel" is expected to involve their sequels in the 2007 festival later

this month. But Bong Revilla's "Transformers"-like "Resikoo" is also expected to provide strong competition.

Other official film fest entries: "Katas ng Saud," "Bahay Kubo," "Banal," "Desperadas" and "5 Anak ng Kumander."

On point of star value, the 2007 MMFF entries boasts of the participation of other stellar leads like Maricel Soriano, Den-

nis Trillo, Dingdong Dantes, Jennylyn Mercado, Manny Pacquiao, Jinggoy Estrada, Marvin Agustin, Ara Mina, Iza Calzado and Ruffa Gutierrez.

As for quality, the point system for the selected screenings scored 50 percent for commercial viability, 40 percent for creativity and innovativeness, and 10 percent for cultural and historical values.

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1 ENCHANTED 2:35, 5:15, 7:55, 10:35 PG

2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:35 PG-13

3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30 PG-13

4 THE KINGDOM 3:20, 6:05 5:40, 10:30 R-13

GRANDHOUSE DEATH PROOF 5:40, 10:30 R-13

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MTRCB G ALL AGES ARE ADMITTED

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john cusack
amanda peet
and
bobby coleman

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ENTERTAINMENT

Two explosive finales in one channel!

C/S will let its viewers experience two heart-stopping and intriguing finales in two of the year's most watched programs!

Jack Bauer will finally unravel the mastermind behind his toughest day yet as the finale of 24 Season 6 airs this December. This season has seen Jack encounter the presence of his brother and the stomach-churning possibility that other family members of the Bauer clan may be involved in the day's frightening events.

The Sole Survivor will be known this December, as SURVIVOR China will reveal its \$1 million winner. Find out who was able to outwit, outplay and outlast the competition only on C/S!

See it first with C/S this 2008!

Getting to watch all the latest and popular US TV programs on local television used to involve a lot of switching from one channel to another.

While many channels have claimed to be capable of providing premium and quality entertainment as demanded by today's discriminating TV audience, no one else has come close except for one channel: C/S.

On January 1, 2008, C/S, the pioneering authority when it comes to showing the latest, most talked about shows can now be seen on Free TV RPN 9, thus ushering in an unparalleled selection of top-notch, quality programming to Filipino homes nationwide, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

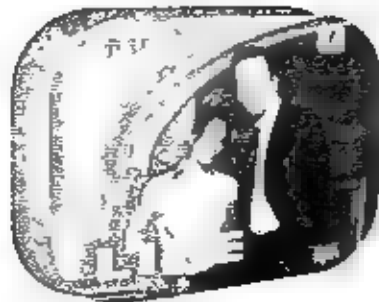
C/S is the home of the latest seasons of huge TV hit series such as *Heroes*, *24*, and *Prison Break*, including award-winning and critically acclaimed titles that include *The Sopranos*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *The X-Files*, the *Survivor* franchise and the *Law & Order* franchises.

C/S is set to premiere many new shows which include the highly anticipated reimagining of *Bionic Woman*; the odd adventures of *Chuck*; the long-awaited debut of the *Terminator* movie franchise in *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles*; the engaging espionage of *Burn Notice* and the TV debut of James Patterson's *Women's Murder Club*.

Find all the number one TV shows in the US in one channel, and get 100% entertainment that's 100% free only with C/S.

C/S can also be seen on SkyCable channel 14, Destiny Cable channel 14, and Cablelink channel 14.

C/S FIRST. C/S FREE.



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TV 12 Baguio

TV 5 Zamboanga

TV 5 Cagayan De Oro

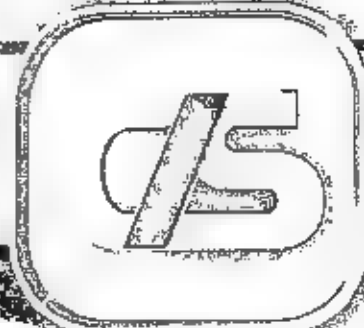
RPN 9 Cebu

TV 8 Bacolod

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It's a new *destination* with *new neighbors* on 2nd Avenue

It was not too long ago that finding a TV channel that catered to the whims and desires of those who live a truly unique urban lifestyle used to be non-existent until 2nd Avenue, the channel that featured entertainment without borders, made its TV debut.

Finally, urbanites, socialites and everyone in between were able to enjoy the pleasures of a channel that kept them entertained with engaging talk shows, up-to-the-minute news programs, compelling dramas, side-splitting sitcoms and unscripted reality series.

2nd Avenue is the official residence of *The Ellen DeGeneres Show* as it is also the place where the latest seasons of highly acclaimed programs *Nip/Tuck*, *Weeds*, *Men in Trees* and *The New Adventures of Old Christine* can be seen.



2nd Avenue is where you hear the latest on the world's current events with Matt Lauer and Meredith Vieira on the *Today Show* and it's also your portal to the world behind the velvet rope with entertainment news programs such as *Entertainment Tonight* and *Insider*.

On January 1, 2008, 2nd Avenue, the premiere urban entertainment channel will now be seen on Free TV UHF RJTV 29 introducing an unparalleled selection of top-notch, quality programming to Philippine TV viewers nationwide, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

2nd Avenue is indeed ready to bring "entertainment without borders" to an all-new level this coming year, as it prepares to traverse further horizons and bring urban entertainment to a wider audience with more of 2nd Avenue's eclectic blend of thought-provoking shows with new programs like *Mad Men*, the critically-lauded new series from the makers of *The Sopranos*; the captivating competition of interior designers on *Top Design*, and Candace Bushnell's *Lipstick Jungle*, a stylish new series featuring a powerful and chic triumvirate.

With a new destination and new neighbors on the same avenue, viewers will get more of the engaging, fascinating & scintillating programs they enjoy that can only be found on 2nd Avenue.

2nd Avenue will now be seen on UHF RJTV 29 and on Sky Cable channel 19, Destiny Cable channel 31 and Dream Satellite TV 36.

TOP DESIGN



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Global Destiny Cable Ch. 31

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The News and the newsmaker on ETC!



CBS EVENING NEWS with Katie Couric



THE EARLY SHOW

Set to make its premiere amongst ETC's vibrant new programs for 2008, *Gossip Girl* tells the tale of socialite young adults growing up on New York's Upper East Side. Actress Blake Lively (*The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants*) leads an ensemble cast in this highly popular series based on Cecily von Ziegesar's bestselling novels of the same name. Created by Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage, *Gossip Girl* explores the drama of many contemporary teenage issues.

Get news and analysis of today's pressing matters happening around the world as evening news broadcast makes its return to ETC with the debut of *The CBS Evening News* with Katie Couric. She took the place of long-time anchor Dan Rather, and is the first woman to solo-anchor of the weekday evening news on one of the three traditional U.S. broadcast networks.



gossip girl

ETC keeps it all good and all free this 2008!

Keeping up to date with the latest in Hollywood lifestyle and fashion usually requires reading the latest fashion magazines, surfing the internet and spending a lot of time watching various channels on TV.

Nevertheless, one doesn't have to spend that much time keeping up with what's in vogue with Hollywood and the rest of the world because there already is one channel that provides all the latest Hollywood news, hip fashion programs and the most vibrant lifestyle shows today, and that is ETC!

Beginning January 1, 2008, ETC, will now be seen on Free TV UHF SBN 21, introducing an unparalleled selection of top-notch, quality programming to Philippine TV viewers nationwide, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

ETC showcases the best fashion and lifestyle programs that keep many fashionistas and fashionistas-at-heart gleefully content, including the latest seasons of the popular *America's Next Top Model*, *Project Runway*. More fashion advice come in *Queer Eye* (with the Fab Five), *Style Her Famous* (with Jay Manuel) and *Tim Gunn's Guide to Style*.

ETC also airs live broadcasts of *E! News* and *Daily Ten* that feature the hottest Hollywood news & gossip, keeping those who need to know, in the know. New seasons of the high school drama *Friday Night Lights*, the off-beat *How I Met Your Mother* and the glitzy *Entourage* are likewise all set to air.

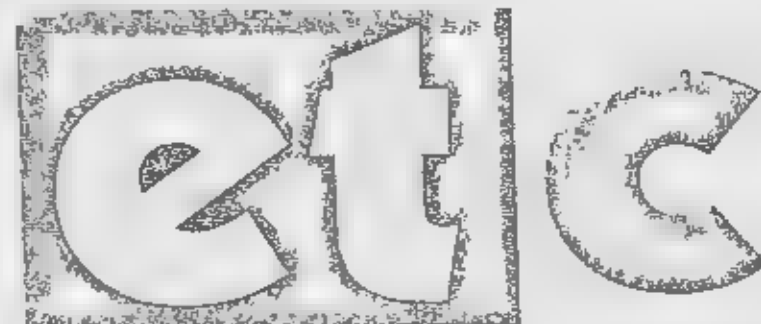
ETC is set to introduce a slew of vibrant new programs for 2008 including the hit freshman series *Gossip Girl* starring Blake Lively and the much anticipated summer debut of *Project Runway Philippines*, an elegant local version of the well-liked show.

Late evening viewers will laugh to their heart's content as *The Late Show with David Letterman* makes its ETC debut while *The CBS Evening News* with Katie Couric marks the return of quality newscast to the channel's line-up.

ETC continues to be the epicenter of all that's happening in the world of entertainment and the coming New Year will absolutely bring more vibrant and engaging TV experience for everyone!

Get the all good entertainment of ETC now on UHF SBN 21, Sky-Cable channel 16, Destiny Cable channel 30, Cable Link channel 50, Dream Satellite channel 27 and also available on My TV.

ALL GOOD ALL FREE!



ENTERTAINMENT CENTRAL

ALL DRAMA



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JACK TV. DEFINITELY The channel for 2008!

Definitely nothing reaches out to viewers more like Jack TV. Through its diversified and unique programming, Jack TV has become a reflection of its many viewers who are young, idealistic, active and who think out-of-the-box.

On January 1, 2008, Jack TV will be available on Destiny Cable channel 32, Cablelink channel 41 and on 300 cable affiliates nationwide, bringing to millions of viewers its diversified and unique programming that has anything and everything for thrill-seeking and adventurous young adults.

Jack TV is home to many of today's most watched programs like the professional wrestling action of the WWE including *WWE Raw* & *WWE Smackdown*, the groundbreaking animated humor of *The Simpsons*, and the award-winning comedy of Steve Carell in *The Office* amongst many others.

Jack TV carries an assortment of distinctive shows that definitely tickle the fancy of viewers who are hungry for true entertainment.

In the coming year, Jack TV will raise its standards of programming with more powerful programs that will get the viewers hooked for more.

No other channels can compete with Jack TV's program blocks that have become the staple for every TV fanatic.

More top-notch sitcoms such as *The IT Crowd*, *Big Bang Theory*, *Aliens In America* and *Unhitched* are moving into Comedyville block, joining its growing collection of award-winning series and sitcoms that bring high-quality entertainment to your TV screens.

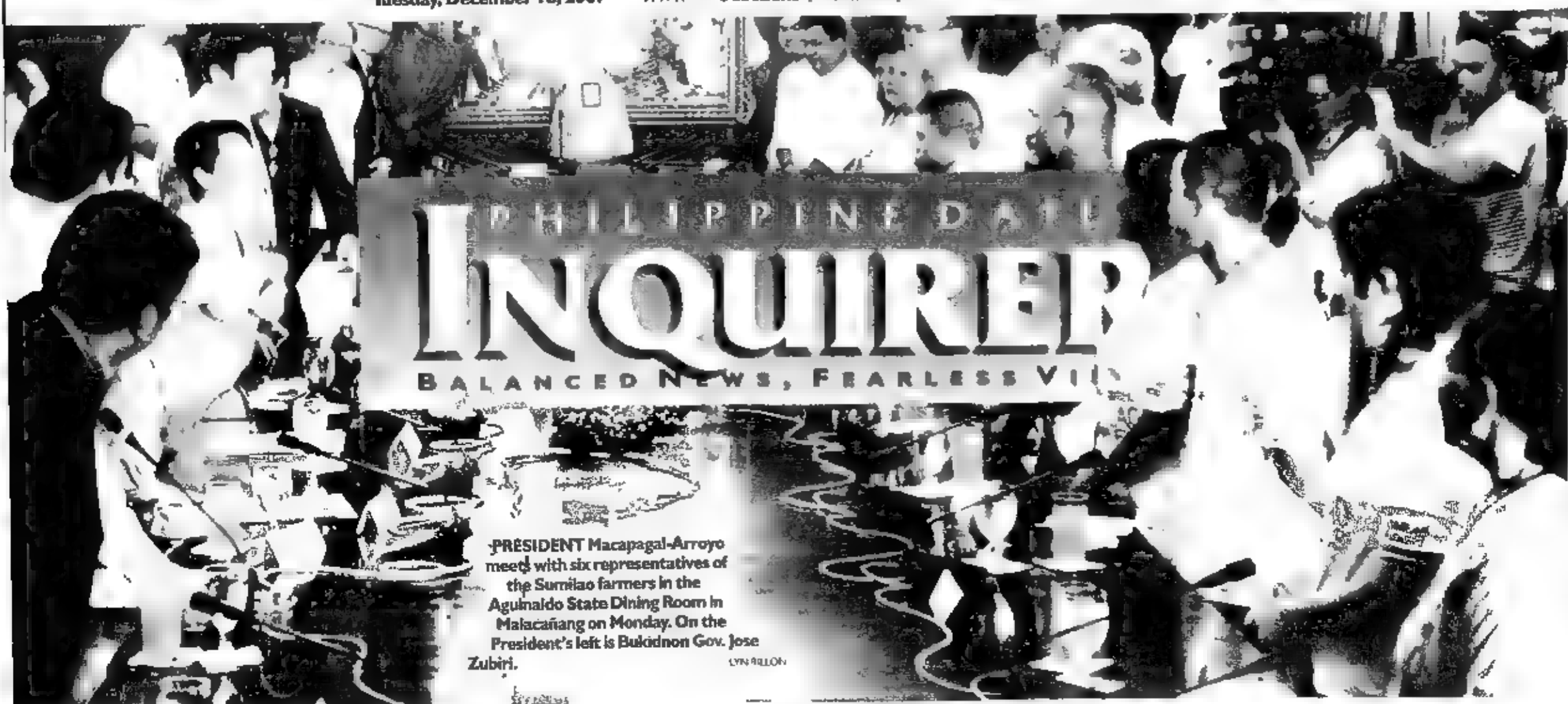
The Crazy Cam block gets even crazier with the addition of *When Hidden Cameras Attack*, while classic comic icons will continue to grace the TV screen on LXB block.

Jack's Booth is still the one-stop ticket for the best and most entertaining movies with more promising events and concerts that viewers will surely wouldn't want to miss.

Jack TV viewers will experience a year like no other as the award-winning live sketch comedy show *Saturday Night Live* make its Jack TV debut while the late night laughs of *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno* and *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* will entertain the nocturnal. The highly anticipated freshman series *Pushing Daisies* will also join the roster of enjoyable Jack TV programs.

No where else can you find real alternative entertainment! Get hooked with the number one alternative channel on cable TV, Jack TV, available on Destiny Cable channel 32, Cablelink channel 41 and My TV.





PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEW

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo meets with six representatives of the Sumilao farmers in the Aginaldo State Dining Room in Malacañang on Monday. On the President's left is Bukidnon Gov. Jose Zubiri.

LYN ARILO

GMA lifts farmers' hopes

Malacañang downplays GMA checkup

By Christine O. Avendaño

MALACAÑANG SOUGHT TO DOWNPLAY yesterday President Macapagal-Arroyo's latest trip to the hospital, with Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye saying the Chief Executive went only for a "routine checkup."

Bunye said he did not know the details of the President's checkup on Sunday night at St. Luke's Medical Center in Quezon City but surmised it may have something to do with her having a "hoarse voice."

A hospital source said Ms Arroyo went to the hospital and left after two hours.

A close presidential aide, Medy Malacañang/A8

Starting Jan. 1, water to cost more in Metro

By Amy R. Remo

STARTING JAN. 1, A HOUSEHOLD consuming 30 cubic meters of water monthly in the east zone of Metro Manila will have to pay an additional P2.08 a day, according to Manila Water Co. Inc. (MWCI).

These households will need to shell out about P62 more for their monthly water bill, which will go up to P395 from the current P333.

In the west zone, however, the average

STARTING/A10

Marchers from Sumilao meet President



PRIESTS, nuns and seminarians accompany the Sumilao farmers on their march to Malacañang on Monday to see the President.

REN ZAMORA

CPP-NPA rejects truce; AFP vows to hunt rebels

By Nikko Dizon and Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

GEN. HERMOGENES ESPERON JR., chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, announced yesterday that troops would hunt down communist guerrillas who killed three Marines, but said the 22-day ceasefire during the holidays unilaterally declared by the government would remain in force.

Esperon told reporters the military would go after the killers of the Marines, pointing out that guidelines for the suspension of operations directed troops to pursue "lawless elements, to patrol around camps and to secure communities."

Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal, spokesperson of the Communist Party of the Philippines, dismissed the government truce as nothing but "gibberish."

CPP-NPA/A10

By Beverly T. Natividad and Michael Lim Ubac

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday embraced farmers who had walked for 1,700 kilometers over two months to see her in Malacañang to demand a return of their ancestral land, which Catholic bishops in a meeting with her late last night predicted would result in a "positive" decision.

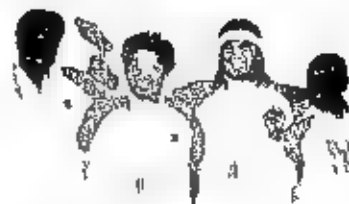
After an hourlong meeting with the farmers in Malacañang in the afternoon, Ms Arroyo proceeded to the headquarters of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines where she again met with Bishops Francisco Claver, Dinualdo Gutierrez and Broderick Padillo for a 30-45 minute consultation. Three representatives of the Sumilao farmers were present in the gathering.

Briefing reporters later in the night, Padillo said that Ms Arroyo, accompanied by Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol, Bukidnon Gov. Jose Zubiri and Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangan-daman, outlined a decision to resolve the farmers' demands.

"We're very optimistic about the deci-

GMA LIFTS/A17

WHAT'S INSIDE



US-trained swimmers saved RP's SEAG stint

SPORTS / A24

Gov't cuts '08 export target to 8 percent

BUSINESS / B1

How to fall in love with exercise

LIFESTYLE / C1

2, 445, '25 to 40' key to saving Earth

BALI, INDONESIA—BEHIND THE MILLIONS of words in documents, speeches and slick brochures at the Bali climate conference lay a set of simple numbers—2 and 445 and "25 to 40."

That's 2 degrees Celsius, 445 parts per

2, 445/A15



Church asks gov't: Focus on other elderly prisoners

By Beverly T. Natividad

CHURCH LEADERS YESTERDAY asked the government to focus its concern on other prisoners who might be more deserving of a presidential pardon than former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, a convicted rapist whose release was abruptly stopped by Malacañang.

Puerto Princesa Bishop Pedro Arigo, head of the Episcopal Commission on Prison Pastoral Care (ECPPC), said his office had submitted a list of 122 inmates who were at least 70 years old to the Department of Justice for review of their cases.

"If it is really possible, we hope they can be released, too," Arigo said in an interview over Catholic-run Radio Veritas.

He cited the cases of ousted President Joseph Estrada, a convicted plunderer, and Pablo Martinez, one of those con-

CHURCH/A8

'I'm a free man, I'm not a prisoner anymore'



"I WILL SUE the government if I'm not released soon," former Congressman Romeo Jalosjos tells the INQUIRER at the New Bilibid Prisons' tennis club on Monday.

By Julie M. Aurelio

HE LOOKS AND TALKS AND MOVES like a free man. When the impulse seizes him, he even plays tennis. He has also booked a Philippine Airlines ticket for his hometown in Mindanao.

So determined is former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos, the convicted rapist of an 11-year-old girl, in asserting his claim to freedom that he has threatened to sue the government if it does not release him.

"If by Wednesday afternoon there is no action yet, we will go to court," Jalosjos told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Authorities at the New Bilibid Prisons on Sunday ordered Jalosjos' discharge in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision in April to commute to 16 years the double life sentence he received for the 1996 rape of a minor. The INQUIRER has a copy of the order.

But Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez blocked the former lawmaker's release, saying that based on the Department of Justice's initial computation of

I'M A FREE MAN/A8

GMA heeded public clamor, says Palace

By Michael Lim Ubac and Leila B. Salaverria

PUBLIC CLAMOR, NOT POLITICS, was behind the decision to keep former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos in prison, Malacañang said yesterday.

"He's still in jail. This is proof to our critics that we have a listening President," Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol said in a phone interview.

He said Ms Arroyo saw the clamor against the early release of the convicted child-rapist.

"There's a public clamor that he should not be released yet, so the President told the Bureau of Corrections to stop his release," Apostol said.

"It was not politics," he said, adding

CONTINUED

House, Senate begin bicam talks on P1-T 2008 budget

THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES yesterday started the process of reconciling each chamber's version of the country's first trillion-peso budget before Congress goes on recess for the holidays on Thursday.

Albay Rep. Edcel Lagman, chair of the House committee on appropriations, said he was confident "an agreement in principle" could be reached by the two houses before the break.

The deliberations on the 2008 budget had been one of the fastest in recent times, with the House approving its version on second reading before the recess in October.

"I'm confident that we will be able to pass it in the shortest possible time," Lagman said in a telephone interview after the Senate and House panels met in the bicameral conference committee on the 2008 budget.

"The problems are more technical than substantial," he said, referring to the pruning of the bicameral committee report and the reconciled version of the General Appropriations Bill before it is ratified by the two houses of Congress and signed into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Among the differences between the Senate and House versions of the budget bill is the amount cut from allocations for debt interest payments.

No cause for concern

"That's not a cause for concern. The Senate has adopted the House special provision on suspending debt interest payments for loans that are challenged as fraudulent," Lagman said.

The House, in its version of the budget, slashed P17.8 billion from debt interest payments and realigned the funds to social services, including a P4.7-billion hike in the Department of Health budget.

The Senate, however, restored P12.1 billion for debt interest payments when it tackled the budget. It only inserted a special provision that would allow further reduction in debt interest payment allocations subject to a stronger peso exchange rate.

"Hopefully, we can agree on realigning to social services the savings on the debt service as a consequence of the continuing appreciation of the peso vis-a-vis the dollar," Lagman said in his opening statement before the bicameral conference committee.

He said allocations of P5 billion for interest payments of loans to fund projected programs still in the pipeline must also be expunged from the executive branch's budget.

"We must not immobilize precious funds which cannot be utilized during the fiscal year," Lagman said.

He cited three commonalities between the Senate and House versions.

Lagman said both versions maintained the budgetary ceiling recommended in the Executive's National Expenditure Program of P1.227-trillion and excised certain allocations to augment basic services. And for the first time since 1999, there were cuts in the debt service payments. *Norman Bordadora*



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House passes meds bill

THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES has approved on second reading the bill promoting lower priced medicines in the country.

In a voice vote, majority of the 240-strong chamber last night overcame the series of objections of an administration lawmaker and passed House Bill No. 2844.

"This will disprove the notion that there is a strong lobby against the measure," Speaker Jose de Venecia said. "The people's interest has clearly prevailed."

Majority Leader Arthur Defensor said the bill would be passed on third and final reading this afternoon, or two days before Congress goes on holiday break.

"It's good as done," Defensor told the inquirer.

The bill is the bicameral conference committee where it would be reconciled with the Senate version. *Christian V. Esquer*



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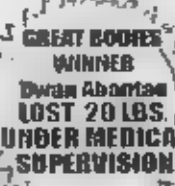
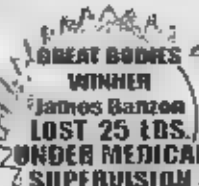
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CPP-NPA rejects truce; AFP vows to hunt rebels

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From page A1

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Rosal in a statement said that the government's "so-called Christmas ceasefires have only served to camouflage the regime and its armed forces' treachery as the AFP continues to justify and pursue military operations against the New People's Army and abuse suspected rebel bases."

Rosal said "the continuing spate of extrajudicial killings, abductions, forced evacuations, arbitrary arrests, illegal detentions, torture, food and economic blockades, burning houses, indiscriminate strafings, aerial bombings and other acts of violence especially in the countryside served as a revealing backdrop to the hypocrisy and emptiness of Ms Arroyo's ceasefire declarations."

"The hypocrisy and treachery of Ms Arroyo's ceasefire is underscored by her declaration the very next day of support for the revival of the Anti-Subversion Law as part of her plan to intensify fascism and cling to power

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For these small customers, the price increase for 2009 will be P0.65 a day, and P0.63 a day for the remaining three years.

MWCI president Antonino Aquino said the new water rates would have different impact on customers.

19-to 28-percent increase

The increase for the residential group, which accounts for almost 85 percent of MWCI's customers, will be an average 19 percent.

For the business or commercial group, it's 20 percent and the industrial group, 28 percent.

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Industrial customers consuming 200 cubic meters monthly will have to pay P1,927 more than their current bill of P6,734.06.

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Agra said there would be no rate rebasing for Maynilad Water because it was under rehabilitation.

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The company is currently expanding its service in Taguig, Antipolo, San Mateo, Rodriguez, Cainta, Taytay and Angono.

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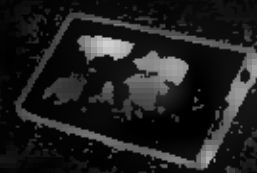
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From page A1

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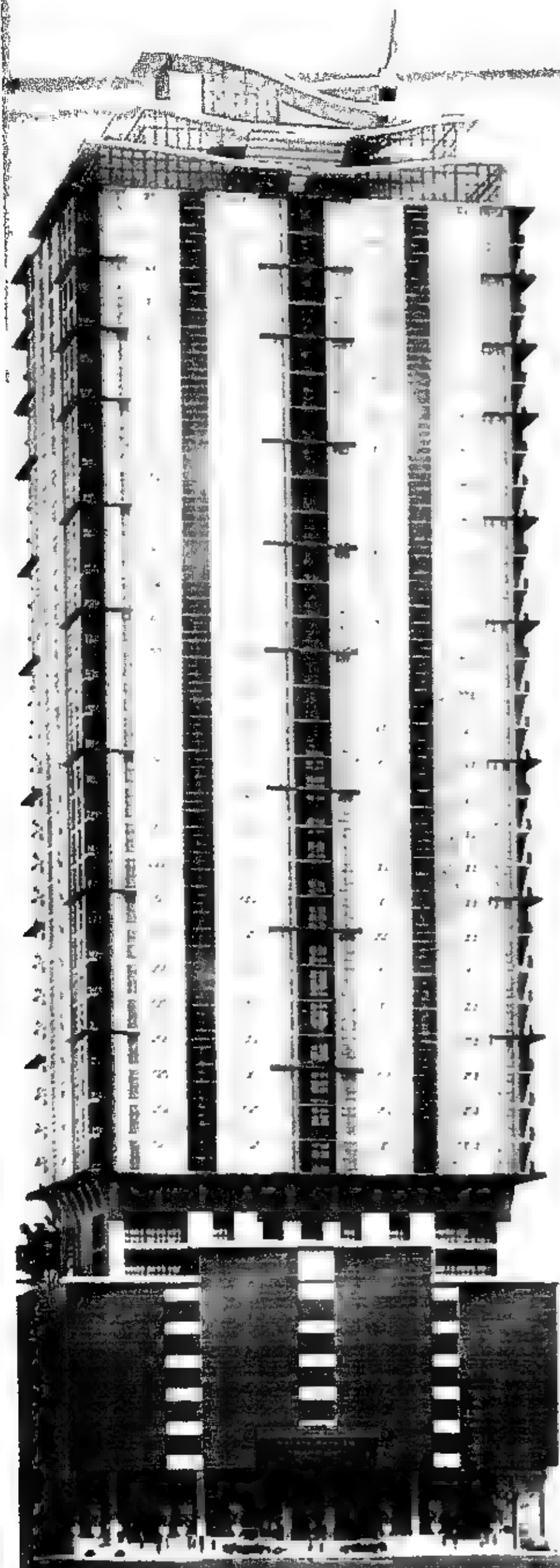
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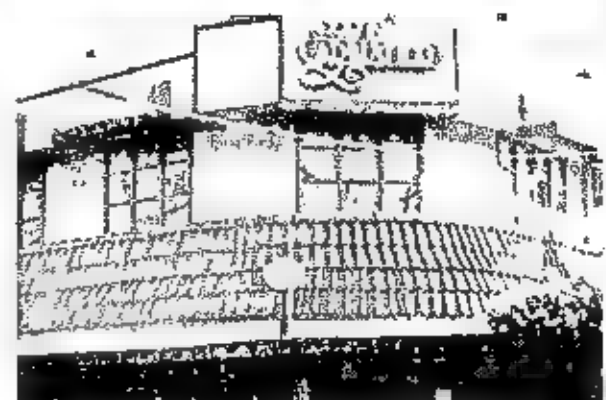
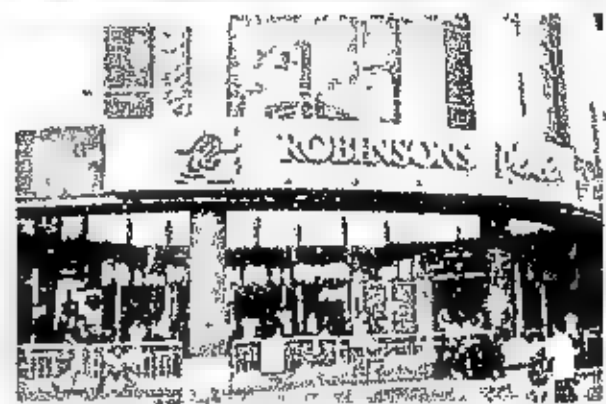
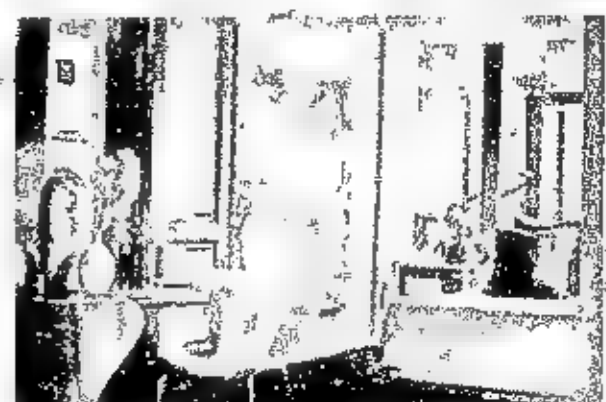
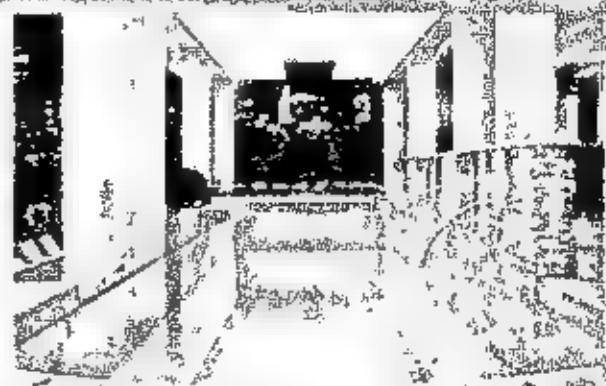
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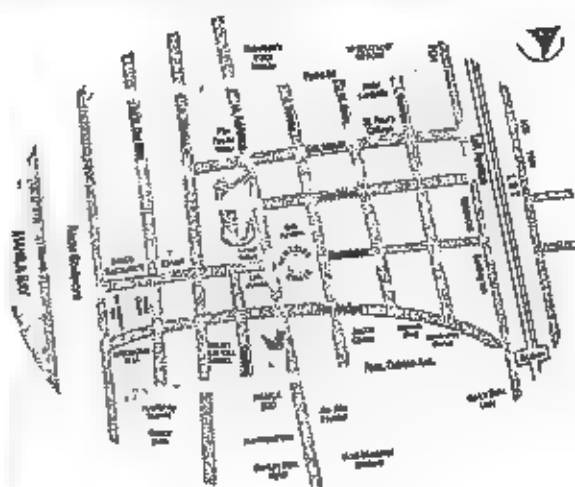
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Dreaming of peace

THIS COMING CHRISTMAS WILL BE the first time I won't be with my family—that is, after 19 years on this earth. I thought it would surely be my bluest Christmas yet.

But upon reading an article about the children planning to send a Christmas letter appealing to the government for a peaceful and safe Christmas, I realized that there are children who are deprived of so many things in life, things that they should be enjoying. I realized how lucky I

am and how lucky those who do not experience the war in the south. These children in Mindanao are not asking for gifts, clothes, or food; they are asking for peace—if only for this coming Christmas.

I wonder how President Macapagal-Arroyo and the honorable public officials who went to Spain for an early Christmas feel about these children and their desire for peace.

—CARLO MAYO R. ANTALAN,
carloantaln_16@yahoo.com.ph

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascarido Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.



Additional signatory to Nov. 28 manifesto

PLEASE INCLUDE MY NAME AS ONE OF the many signatories to the manifesto titled "We Reject a Morally Bankrupt Government." (INQUIRER, 11/28/07)

To reiterate the last paragraph of the manifesto: "We cannot allow pain and ruin of the Filipino. We cannot have a nation without a soul, governance without morality. We must unite! We must struggle for Truth! For Justice! For Meaningful and Fundamental Change!"

I honestly believe that our country urgently needs a moral revolution.

Kudos and more power to the authors of the manifesto!

—CRISOSTOMO B. VILAR,
vice mayor, Pagsanjan, Laguna

Cartoon helped perpetuate the wrong image

THIS PERTAINS TO THE INQUIRER'S Dec. 5 editorial cartoon which depicted the Armed Forces of the Philippines denouncing the findings of the Alston Report as lies. The cartoon succeeded in capturing the popular sentiment that the AFP is "in a state of denial" to its alleged commission of extrajudicial killings in the country. This sentiment, popular as it has been made by Philip Alston and the Philippine media, is far from being fair.

But then again, if the Philippine media has touted the AFP as the perpetrators of these atrocities, certainly a simple caricature cannot be expected to give justice to the embattled image of the AFP.

The Alston Report did not categorically identify the AFP as the sole and undeniable institutional perpetrator of extrajudicial killings in the country. The report also did not altogether dismiss the effort of the Philippine government, the AFP included, in addressing this issue. As a matter of fact, President Macapagal-Arroyo signed last Nov. 26 Administrative Order 211 creating the Task Force against Political Violence (also known as Task Force

211), for the sole purpose of consolidating the national effort to resolve these killings. Likewise, the AFP has since done its homework and remains equally committed and focused in resolving this issue.

Thus, the editorial cartoon only insinuated and propagated the popular yet unsupported notion that the AFP is in a state of denial and remains unperturbed by the issue, and nothing more.

The INQUIRER's much vaunted commitment to "Balanced News, Fearless Views" is reassuring enough for us to expect fairer treatment of the AFP in relation to this issue. But the Filipino people have yet to see a depiction of the CPP-NPA's penchant for People's Courts, which according to Alston "do not comply with human rights and humanitarian law standards." This hardly exposed fact has persistently eluded the INQUIRER's "Balanced News and Fearless Views" style of journalism. But then again, it might be too much to expect from the INQUIRER.

—RICARDO R. BLANCAFLOR,
undersecretary,
Department of Justice, Manila

Maynilad: We fixed pipe on day letter came out

THIS REFERS TO FERNANDO A. DE SEQUERA Jr.'s letter about a leaking pipe in the middle of a street in Sta. Mesa, Manila (INQUIRER, 12/3/07)

The pipe in question was repaired on the same day that his letter appeared. The delay in repairing the leak was due to the need to first secure an excavation permit which our crew needed to make repairs in a busy thoroughfare such as the one in which the busted pipe was located.

As to the cost of the leaking water eventually being passed on to our customers, we would like to assure De Sequera and the public that our customers only pay for the water that passes through their meters.

We would like to take this opportunity to inform the public that Maynilad, under its new owners (the DMIC-MPIC consortium), is currently undertaking a massive upgrading and expansion program amounting to P5 billion this year and another P6 billion next year, precisely to reduce, if not eliminate, such problems as leaking pipes, faulty meters and illegal connections, and to provide much better service for our West Zone customers.

We thank De Sequera for his concern, and we apologize to the public for whatever inconvenience brought about by our massive, ongoing pipe-laying projects.

—JESS MATUBIS JR.,
assistant vice president,
Corporate Affairs
and Media Relations,
Maynilad Water Services Inc.,
Katipunan Road, Balara, QC

Police right and media wrong in Pen takeover

THE PENINSULA MANILA TAKEOVER should teach us a lesson: Never trust anyone who uses the gun as a first resort to solve his problems. In a civil society, the use of guns in any situation is utterly unacceptable. (Not that I believe this, but this is how it is in civil society.)

I am someone who is known to have a really bad temper. Many times I wish I could just cock a gun and shoot at the object of my rage. But then again, we are governed not only by the laws of man, but by the laws of God as well.

I am one of the stupid people who voted for Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV because I thought that it was better to take his fight to the Senate than to the streets. He wanted the military to have a voice; we, 11 million voters, decided to give it to him.

We are so tired of this country's woes. We are tired of this country's failure to take off in the last 21 years, because every time we begin to show signs of recovery, some cocky rightist would launch a coup against the government. When will the coups ever end?

Trillanes has betrayed us.

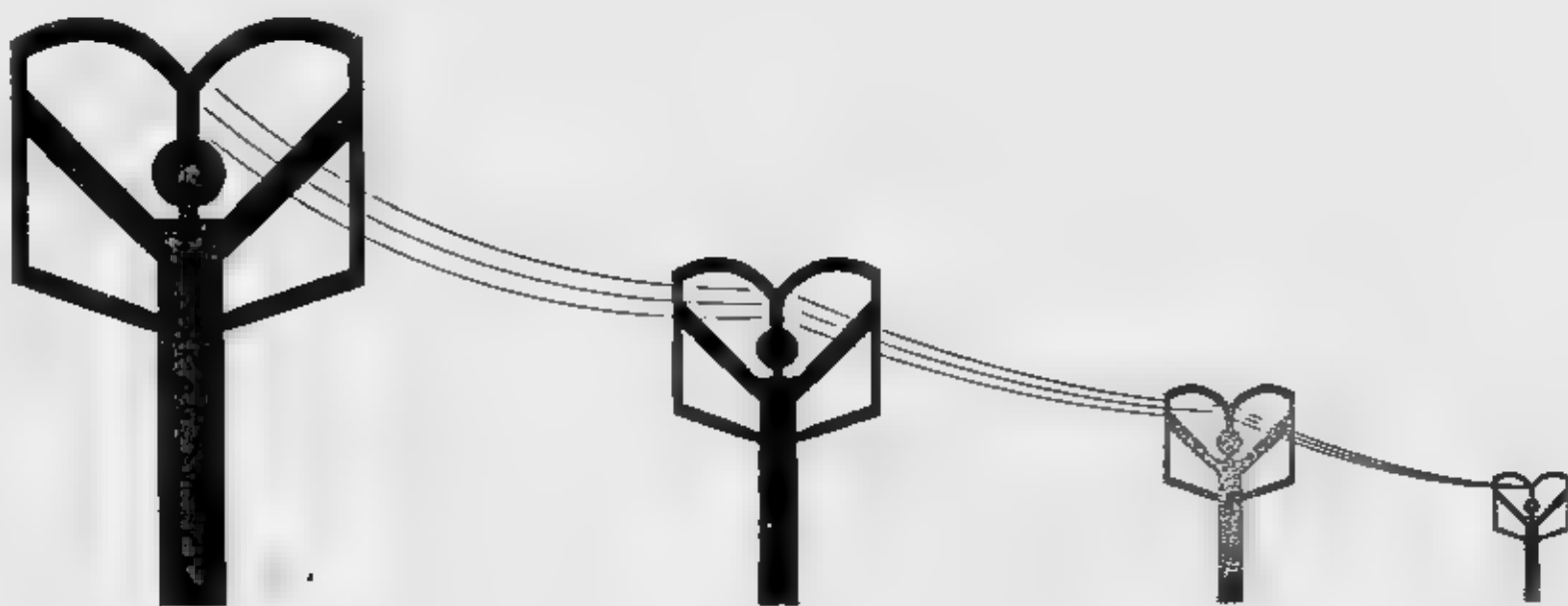
I think the way the police and the military handled the situation was laudable. Some may say that crashing an armed personnel carrier (APC) into the hotel was overkill. I don't think so. By swiftly and decisively crushing the coup, the government has shown that it will do everything in its power to deal with any attempt to destabilize the government and the economy.

I also applaud Senate President Manuel Villar for discouraging a Senate inquiry on this one. He said he'd rather wait for the courts to decide. He's right. We have institutions that are ready to work for us, if we are ready to build a strong case. Getting the Senate involved in every issue best left to the courts would be a waste of taxpayer's money.

As for the spoiled media crying foul over their arrest, I think they deserved it. They were reporting everything, including police positions. The government forces lost its advantage of surprise. The only way they could gain the upper hand was to barge into the hotel quickly with an APC and tear gas.

Let the media do their job? Don't get in their way? How about the media getting into the way of the police and military operations? If you don't want to get burned, don't go into the burning house!

—LAWRENCE SEE,
lsee@pbcom.com.ph



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Nielsen Media Index Wave 1 2007 Figures. Among broadsheet readers yesterday.

2, 445, '25 to 40' key to saving Earth

From page A1
million of carbon dioxide, and a 25-to-40-percent reduction in global warming gases—a formula, some say, to save the planet from climate change's severest consequences.

In the end, at US insistence, none of those numbers appeared in key final document of the United Nations conference.

But in the coming two years of crucial climate negotiations, as authorized at Bali, those simple numbers are sure to become chips in the high-stakes diplomatic, political and economic bargaining of almost 190 nations involved.

Saturday's decision ending the two-week meeting capped a year in which a UN network of climate scientists delivered troubling news: Global warming is a fact, very likely attributable to manmade emissions; warming seas are rising faster all the time; and impacts are already felt, from species extinction to erratic weather.

Things are likely to get much, much worse if the world doesn't sharply reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and a handful of other industrial, transportation and agricultural gases blamed for global warming, according to a series of reports issued by the Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Serious effects

The IPCC noted that the atmosphere had already warmed by an average 0.7 degrees Celsius (1 degree Fahrenheit) compared with the early 19th century, and that with an additional 1.3 degrees, totaling 2 degrees Celsius (3.4 degrees Fahrenheit), serious effects would ensue—regional water shortages, crop failures, widespread loss of coral reefs, more deaths from heat waves, more severe storms, etc.

To keep the cumulative rise to 2 degrees Celsius, the panel concluded, heat-trapping greenhouse gases in the atmosphere should be kept below 445 parts per million in carbon dioxide or its equivalent in other gases. The concentration is now estimated at below 400, after subtracting offsetting heat-shielding effects.

Early in the Bali conference, more than 200 scientists—many of them UN report authors—made a rare foray into politics and diplomacy with a petition calling on the UN climate treaty nations to adopt those 2-degree and 445-ppm ceilings as a "minimum requirement."

The European Union and many other nations had already done so, endorsing the goal of reducing industrial nations' green-

house gas emissions by 25 to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2020, a formula the IPCC has suggested to keep temperatures rising no more than 2 degrees Celsius.

That goal was also inscribed into the early drafts of the Bali final document, which envisioned contributions, too, from such fast-developing poorer nations as China and India, in the form of voluntary programs to rein in emissions growth.

Dropped from document

"This process has to be driven by the science," said environmentalist Matthias Duwe, of Europe's Climate Action Network. "There are no questions any more about the sheer scale of the challenge we are facing."

But the numbers were rejected by

the United States and were eventually dropped from the Bali document.

"The European approach is focused exclusively on the science, but we also have to analyze the actual technological pathways it takes to get to a particular objective," Jim Connaughton, White House environmental chief, told reporters here.

"We can be very ambitious, but cuts that deep, that fast, are simply beyond reach."

Alone among major industrial nations, the United States rejects the relatively modest cuts of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, which expires in 2012.

The task that the rest of the world has now taken on, with the upcoming "Bali Roadmap" negotiations, is to try to bring the Americans into a

new, post-2012 regime of deep and mandatory reductions in greenhouse emissions.

Many nations as well as scientists look beyond the Bush administration and toward a new negotiating partner that will be chosen in next November's US presidential election, an American leader many expect to be a Democrat.

They were encouraged by the words last week of a key Democratic environmentalist, Sen. John Kerry, discussing the upcoming climate negotiations with The Associated Press.

"If scientists are telling us we have to keep Earth's increase in temperature to no more than 2 degrees Celsius and 445 ppm, that has to be the guide," the Massachusetts senator said. "That's the heart and soul of any negotiation."



SAMI RUISMAEKI, one of Finland's 7,000 reindeer herders whose livelihoods are becoming more and more precarious, tends to a reindeer in the Finnish Arctic town of Rovaniemi.

AP

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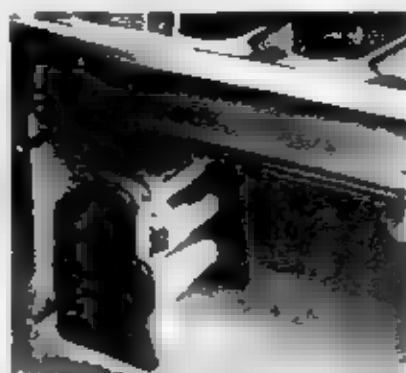
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THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 18, 2007
3rd Week of Advent

1st Reading: Jer 23:5-8
Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

This is how Jesus Christ was born. Mary's mother had been given to Joseph in marriage but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.

Then Joseph, her husband, made plans to divorce her in all secrecy. He was an upright man, and in no way did he want to discredit her.

While he was pondering over this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, descendant of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She has conceived by the Holy Spirit, and now she will bear a son. You shall call him Jesus for he will save his people from their sins."

All this happened in order to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: The virgin will conceive and bear a son, and he will be called Emmanuel which means: God with us. When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do and he took his wife to his home. So she gave birth to a son and he had not had marital relations with her. Joseph gave him the name of Jesus.

Commentary

We await a child. But this child will be a man of justice, integrity, and wisdom in his governance of the world. His name is "the Lord of justice." The history of Israel continues—out of Egypt into Israel, out of Babylon into Israel—now it lies in bondage under Rome. But they will again live in their own lands—but now this land is all the world, the kingdom of God in Jesus, born of God and humankind in Mary.

Joseph, the just man, breaks a law to save the life of the woman he is engaged to because he hears the Word of God in the dream of the angel, and the words of the ancient Scriptures and the prophecies. He hopes and lives on God's word, even sleeping and dreaming God's revelation. Joseph in Matthew's gospel is the image of the one who becomes a follower of the One who is to come: the child born and named Jesus who saves his people from their sins. Joseph is the obedient one, who knows that no law can ever be used to destroy life or to harm another person. He obeys the word of God and interprets all the old into new life for all, giving his life so that others may live. And so, he becomes the man who adopts the God-child Jesus as his own son. There is so much to learn of Joseph the believer, as much as anything we could learn from his wife/friend Mary.

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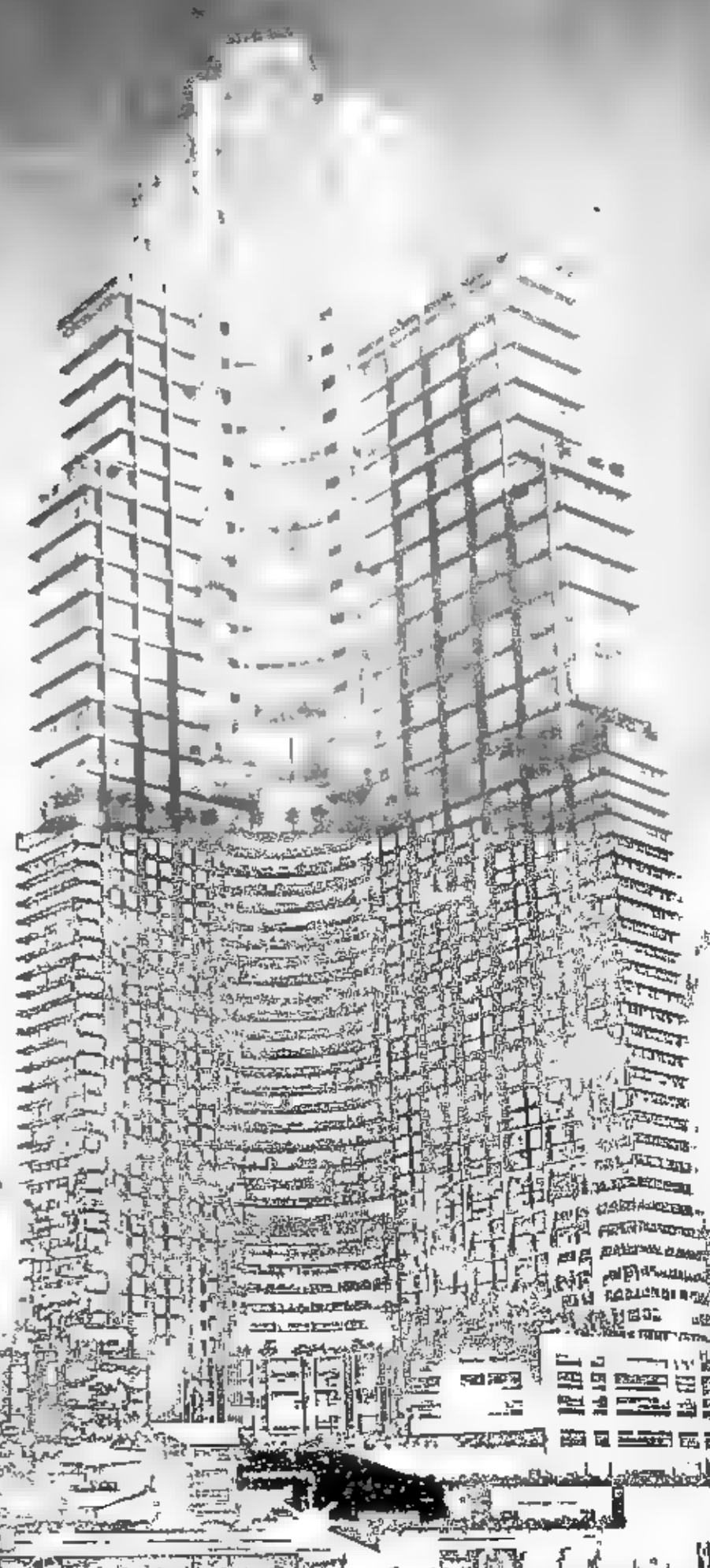
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THE USUALLY brightly lit Policarpio Street in Mandaluyong City is dimmer now, with only five of the 30 houses decked out in Christmas lights.

NINO JESUS ORBETA

Text came too late for cops after robbers

By Nancy C. Carvajal

A TEXT MESSAGE WHICH DID NOT arrive on time yesterday prevented the police from setting up a blocking force for nine motorcycle-riding armed men who had just robbed a steel factory in Valenzuela City.

As a result, the police were caught unprepared and the suspects were able to get away.

Before escaping, the suspects fired at two policemen with their M-16 rifles, leaving them wounded.

Chief Supt. Pedro Tango, Northern Police District director, said SP02 Juanito Lazaro and P03 Robert Vecida, members of the NPD Investigation and Intelligence Division, sustained several gunshot wounds. The two were waiting for instructions on where to position themselves when the suspects chanced upon them.

Both were rushed to the hospital for treatment and were later declared out of danger by doctors.

Tango said that three of the suspects were also wounded.

"We are now scouring all hospitals in Metro Manila and nearby areas in search of the suspects," he said.

"According to the NPD director, they received a text message from a concerned citizen about a robbery at the Top Mark Steel Corp. located in the Sacred Heart compound on San Diego Street, Canumay West at around 9 a.m.

Based on reports, the nine suspects barged inside the establishment, hogtied all the personnel inside and divested them of their cell phones, cash and other valuables.

DND chief Senior Supt. Rafael Santiago said that had they received the text message in real time, they would have been able to set up a blocking force.

Tango, meanwhile, said they had identified the leader of the group, a certain Gilbert, who was allegedly behind a bank robbery in Quezon City last October.

Isafp invitation to Roldan gets flak from group

By Kristine L. Alave

SHAME ON YOU.

This was the message of an anticrime group leader to the military's intelligence division for inviting an international speaker Dennis Roldan, a former Quezon City congressman and actor who is being tried for allegedly kidnapping a 3-year-old boy.

Teresita Ang See, spokesperson of the Citizen's Action Against Crime and Corruption, yesterday castigated the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines for its "insensitivity" when it invited Roldan to grace its flag-raising rites on Dec 3. She said the Isafp should publicly apologize for its "sickening" action.

"It is a big blow to us anticrime advocates and even more to the victims of kidnapping who have been traumatized by their ordeal," she said in a statement.

Roldan, who has professed his innocence, is out on bail while his case is being heard in a Pasig City court.

The night the lights went out on Policarpio

By Kristine L. Alave

THE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS ARE not as bright this year on Policarpio Street in Mandaluyong City.

Unruly crowds and rising power costs have forced most of the residents in the area not to put up their usual extravagant displays for the holidays, drawing a significantly smaller and disappointed crowd who were

used to seeing the small street tucked inside the city all aglow every holiday season.

Anastacio Lagman, security director of the Policarpio Residents Association, said the majority of homeowners opted for a "toned down" Christmas because the huge crowds attracted petty criminals to the area.

He added that the thousands of nightly visitors also resulted in property damage, with some

residents complaining of cars with scratch marks and wrecked flower beds.

Lagman said the holiday rush also wreaked havoc on their daily schedules, with most of them unable to sleep until after the crowds had thinned out.

The bazaar in the area also compounded their security problems. This year, those who wanted to do business had to set up their stalls near the gates. "We've


also cut back on electricity so the displays are fewer," he said.

Lagman clarified that the association did not prevent other homeowners from setting up their Christmas displays, a practice in the past 10 years.

When the lights were turned on last Saturday, much later than the old mid-November schedule, only five of the 30 houses in the street were

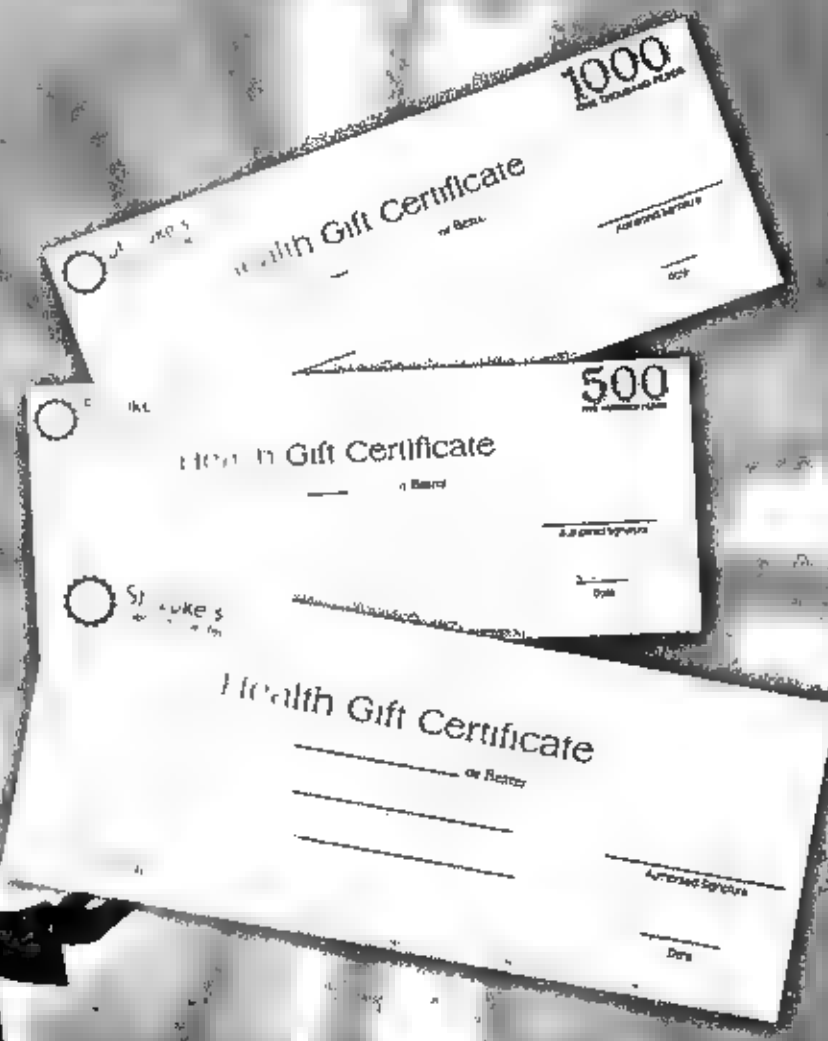
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HOMEOWNERS say the higher cost of electricity and the unruly crowd prompted them to tone down their holiday display this year.

PHOTO BY JESSE CHIRIA

The night the lights...

From page A19

decked out in holiday décor.

One of the houses owned by the Dalisay family was covered in Tivoli lights. Even their water tower was transformed into a golden tree, with a star on top.

Another house featured Santa Clauses in different sizes.

Normalyn Lim, one of the five homeowners who chose to "go on with the show," said she and the other "hold-

outs" wanted to continue making people feel the joy of Christmas.

Even though their electric bill more than doubles every December, Lim said the expression on people's faces when they see the lights makes it all worth it.

"It's already a tradition," she said. "The people always come to Policarpio during Christmas, even though life is hard."

Both Lim and Lagman ad-

mitted that Christmas in the area this year is not as festive as before. "It's sad," Lim said.

She added that even Mayor Benhur Abalos was disappointed over the residents' decision to tone down their displays, saying Policarpio Street had become a major tourist attraction in Mandaluyong City during the holidays.

Nes Serseña, a resident, said it was unfortunate that it was dummer in the area this year. She added that her family always made it a point to go to the street every year to feel the holidays.

Lagman admitted that they have received reports that people were disappointed at the fewer displays. "Maybe they are not used to it," he said.

Asked if there was hope for seeing a decked out Policarpio Street next Christmas, Lagman only shrugged. Now that he and his neighbors have felt a peaceful holiday season, it's hard to turn back, he said.

'Unsafe' venue delays ballot box inventory in Pasig City

By Kristine L. Alava

THE INVENTORY OF BALLOT boxes from 1,317 precincts in Pasig City was delayed yesterday after the local Commission on Elections said the space designated for the activity was "unsafe."

Ma. Anne Gonzales, the city's election supervisor, said they could not proceed with the inventory and sealing of the ballot boxes because she was still in the process of securing the place.

The Comelec Second Division earlier ordered a recount of the votes from the 1,317 precincts after former Pasig City Rep. Robert "Dudut" Jaworski Jr. filed an electoral protest, questioning the victory of Robert Eusebio in the May 14 mayoral elections.

Based on the Comelec's tally, Eusebio garnered 116,463 votes against Jaworski's

107,141 votes.

Gonzales said she asked the Comelec main office in Intramuros, Manila to postpone the inventory that was supposed to start yesterday until the Pasig City sports complex becomes available for their use.

Gonzales said the city government is using the site as a distribution center for its Christmas outreach program.

While the local Comelec is waiting for the order from the head office, Gonzales said she has started preparations for the inventory which would be conducted in an open space near the sports complex.

The poll chief said she has asked the engineering office to build makeshift tents for their use and the traffic management office to clear the area of passing vehicles.

"It is making me nervous because it's an open space. But we have to follow and treat this as a hazard in the profession," Gonzales said.

Should the Comelec deny their request for extension, Gonzales said they would start the inventory and the sealing of the ballot boxes today.

The ballot boxes would then be shipped to the Comelec office in Manila for the actual recount.

The Pasig City mayoralty was one of the hotly contested posts in Metro Manila in the last May 14 national and local elections.

Eusebio and Jaworski, who both belong to administration parties, hurled accusations of vote buying and massive poll cheating against each other from the start of the campaign period until the canvassing.

Most corrupt label: How Marcos would have reacted

IF FERDINAND MARCOS WERE president and the government were in the pre-martial law era, he would have worried no end over the results of a Pulse Asia survey finding him the most corrupt president of the country.

But our president is Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo who doesn't give a hoot what people think about her governance.

The results of a recent Pulse Asia survey of people's perception of GMA as the most corrupt president seem to have had no effect on her.

No amount of criticisms from the public and media will ever daunt Ms Arroyo because she knows the "stars" favor her.

She knows that people are tired of having another "Edsa." She has the complete backing of

the military. She has the backing of the House of Representatives. She has the backing of local government officials.

In short, while Marcos would have hung his head in shame over the Pulse Asia survey, Ms Arroyo goes about her business seemingly unaffected by all the brickbats thrown her way.

The sentiment in Malacañang is that Ms Arroyo is no longer up for reelection, so why should she worry about the people's perception?

I was able to have a glimpse firsthand of how Marcos reacted to an adverse report about his government. My comments were contained in a column

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo



item I wrote in the then Bulletin Today in 1983 in the aftermath of the assassination of Ninoy Aquino.

In that Bulletin column, quoting unnamed airport sources, I wrote that a certain Fe Gimenez, who turned out to be a member of Marcos' "Kitchen Cabinet," boarded a plane at the Manila International Airport carrying an undetermined amount of dollars.

That was the time when the

value of the dollar vis-à-vis the peso had gone up drastically as a result of Ninoy's assassination.

Apparently, the Marcoses were already panicking and sending out money abroad, but the people didn't know at that time.

President Marcos read my column and called up Pat Gonzales, then the executive editor of the Bulletin, to expect a reaction from Malacañang.

Pat called me to his office and told me my column for the following day had been preempted. He said that as we were talking, Marcos was writing my column for me.

It would be made to appear

that I wrote the column, based on a reaction from Malacañang.

"Mon, the President is worried about the repercussions your column has made on his government."

Imagine, the President is now your ghost writer? Pat told me excitedly.

At that time, the Bulletin was the No. 1 newspaper. (The INQUIRER came out much later. —RT)

Whatever news or column item that came out of the paper, although it was operating under severe constraints, was taken seriously by Marcos himself.

Remember that at that time, Marcos held people by the neck, and yet, ironically,

was concerned about what they thought about him.

What's Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's reaction to adverse reports about her?

During the early days of her administration and before the 2004 national elections, Ms Arroyo also worried about the people's perception of her as a leader.

She held regular conferences with her staff and publicists on how to improve her image. I attended one or two of such meetings in Malacañang.

But I notice that after weathering the "Hello Garci" scandal, she no longer worries over reports in the media about how she is running the government.

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The WORLD

JI leader hailed to court

JAKARTA—THE LEADER of Islamic militant network Jemaah Islamiah was brought to an Indonesian court on Monday to face trial over his activities as part of the group blamed for the deadly Bali bombings.

Zarkasi entered a holding cell at South Jakarta district court amid tight security then spread newspaper sheets across the opening so that photographers could not take his picture, an AFP correspondent saw.

An indictment specifying the exact charges against him was expected to be read out at the start of the trial, slated to begin later Monday.

Police have accused him of controlling JI operations across Indonesia, overseeing the training of its leaders, controlling weapons and ammunition, and managing assignments for attacks in religiously-divided Poso in Sulawesi.

Zarkasi, who has admitted he became the group's leader by default in 2004 as it searched for a more appropriate person to take the reins, has told police he would testify against JI in court.

However when he testified in another accused militant's trial last month, he said he did not understand many of the terms prosecutors were using, meaning he avoided giving answers in full.

He also denied knowledge of specific attacks in Poso and involvement in supplying weapons destined for the area, contrary to an earlier statement he made to police. **AFP**

Britain turns Basra over to Iraqi forces

BAGHDAD—BRITISH FORCES HANDED OVER control of Basra province to Iraq's government on Sunday, giving up military control of the final region under their supervision after four-and-a-half years.

US officials believe the transfer will be a serious test of Iraqi political and military leaders' ability to maintain control of Basra—a strategically vital and politically fractious southern province with a port city of the same name—and prevent Iran or Shiite militias from gaining too much influence.

In a formal ceremony, conducted indoors to avoid mortar attacks from the militias that have battled British forces over the years, Maj. Gen. Graham Birns of the British Army said Iraq was prepared to take over the Basra region, with British forces assuming a much lower profile in a supporting role.

The two most prominent rival groups are the Mahdi Army, led by the anti-American Shiite cleric Muqtada al Sadr, and the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, a

militia affiliated with the political faction of the same name.

After the ceremony, Mowafak al Rubaie, Iraq's national security adviser, challenged Basra's provincial and city leaders to stabilize the region.

"The security of Basra is one of our main responsibilities," al-Rubaie said. "I address, directly, the governor, the general commander of the security forces in Basra, the provincial council and the people of Basra. Will you agree with militias? Will you engage in corruption? Will you go easy on terrorism?"

Basra is the ninth and most important province to be transferred to Iraqi control by US-led forces since July 2006. Gen. David H. Petraeus, the top US commander in Iraq, said in a statement Sunday that Iraqi

forces had "demonstrated their readiness" to take over. But the statement also hinted at the fragile nature of the transfer in achieving a peaceful transition.

Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, the day-to-day commander in Iraq, said Sunday that US officials were concerned about whether Iraqi forces would prevent Iran, which shares a border with Basra province, from meddling in the region.

Elsewhere in Iraq on Sunday, fierce fighting erupted in Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad, between Sunni tribesmen who have begun supporting US forces and members of al-Qaida in Mesopotamia, the mostly homegrown insurgent group that US intelligence believes is led by foreigners.

In the seven-hour battle in three villages northeast of Diyala's provincial capital, Baqouba, 35 militants and 18 local residents were killed, according to a police official in Khalis, a Baqouba suburb. **NYT**



THE SUN sets over Baghdad, Aug. 29. Iraq staggers marginally more hopeful into 2008 due to falling violence on the back of a controversial US military surge, but long-term peace between rival political blocs is still a distant dream. **AFP**

Bill Clinton intensifying his campaign for Hillary

DUNLAP IOWA—WHEN SEN. Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign advisers laid out their new political strategy in a private conference call with allies on Tuesday, Bill Clinton was not on the line. He did not need to be: The message being delivered was his.

A day earlier, Clinton had unveiled the campaign's new talking points at rallies in Iowa. His wife was "a change agent," "a proven agent of positive change," and "a lifetime advocate of a change agenda."

The "change, change, change" phrase, as some advisers call it, was coined by Clinton after he told campaign officials that the old strategy of running as an incumbent-like front-runner was not enough, advisers said. The Clintons had to wrest the message of change from Sen. Barack Obama instead.

On the conference call, the campaign's chief strategist, Mark Penn, reinforced the idea. Clinton is not running his wife's campaign for the

Democratic presidential nomination, but less than three weeks before Clinton's first test in the Iowa caucuses, he has become the most powerful force in her political operation besides the candidate herself. He is shaping strategy, challenging advisers on their assumptions, chiming in on tone and details of news releases, and acting like a vice presidential candidate in a general election—attacking rivals and defending the candidate so Clinton can stay

positive much of the time.

Yet as the Clinton campaign has struggled on various fronts over the last six weeks, Clinton has at times been part of the problem. His higher profile in the campaign is again focusing attention on his profoundly mixed legacy, encompassing his skills as a campaigner and the economic boom of the 1990s but also his personal indiscretions and the hostility and derision aimed at him and his wife by much of the Republican Party.

Robert Shrum, a Democratic consultant who was senior strategist to John Kerry in 2004, and has worked with Clinton in the past, said that Clinton is a double-sided asset. Strategically brilliant, but also undisciplined and prone to dominate the spotlight.

More than anything, Clinton is increasingly angry with the news media over what he sees as overly critical coverage of Hillary Clinton and kinder treatment of Obama, according to advisers. **NYT**

Canada, US hit by huge snowstorm

MONTREAL—A MAJOR SNOWSTORM tore through eastern Canada and northeastern United States on Sunday, killing at least one person, making driving conditions treacherous and forcing airports to cancel numerous flights.

Southern Ontario and Quebec provinces took the brunt of the bad weather, with Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal struggling under 40 centimeters of snow, as the storm continued unabated late Sunday.

Environment Canada warned that "a crippling major winter storm with heavy snow and blowing snow as well as some ice pellets is moving in ... dangerous winter weather conditions are imminent or occurring" in the affected regions.

It told the public to expect delays and disruptions in air and rail services, as the storm tracked northward toward New Brunswick.

In Toronto, the snowstorm caused some 600 traffic accidents on Sunday morning alone, the provincial police reported.

A woman was killed by a snowplow on a roadside in London, Ontario, police said.

Air Canada recommended its customers check the status of their flights before leaving for the airport, and Rail Canada issued a statement advising the public it was prepared to handle "the increased demand for train tickets."

The same winter storm front also hampered the Great Lakes and northeastern re-



CHRISTY Alford walks along a snow-covered Monon Trail in Indianapolis on Dec. 16. **AP**

gions of the United States, with winter storm warnings extending from Michigan and Indiana to Maine, the US Weather Channel reported.

A blizzard warning has been issued for southeastern Michigan, north of Detroit, the channel added. **AFP**

Pakistan orders probe of escape of Briton accused of bombing plot

ISLAMABAD—PAKISTAN'S GOVERNMENT on Sunday ordered a high-level investigation into the escape from police custody of a British terror suspect, officials said, as a hunt was launched to track him down.

Rashid Rauf—who is suspected of plotting to blow up airliners bound for the United States from London—was being taken from a court hearing on Saturday when he broke free from his handcuffs and ran off, a senior officer said.

Islamabad police said they were questioning several officers over the disappearance, while an official statement also announced the top-level probe.

The three-member committee includes one officer each from the police and interior ministry and a senior official of the Islamabad administration, the statement released by state media said. It has been told

to report within 48 hours.

Earlier interior ministry spokesperson Brig. Javed Cheema told AFP: "Rashid Rauf escaped from police custody and we are making every possible effort to rearrest him."

The police chief of Islamabad, Shahid Nadeem Baluch, told AFP early Sunday: "The hunt is on to track him down. We have conducted some raids but so far there hasn't been any breakthrough."

Rauf, 25, was arrested in central Pakistan in August 2006 and had been behind bars since. The arrest sparked a worldwide security alert and 24 people were detained in Britain in a major swoop.

The following day a massive security alert hit London's Heathrow Airport, with mass cancellations of flights for several days over fears of a terrorist attack. **AFP**

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Gov't cuts '08 export target to 8%

Expected slowdown in Japan, US takes its toll on RP goods

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT SLASHED ITS EXPORTS growth target for 2008, from 12 to 8 percent, due to the expected slowdown in demand from the United States and Japan—the Philippines' biggest export markets.

The interagency Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), which sets the government's economic goals and forecasts, last Friday approved the revised exports growth target.

Although Filipino exporters have been successful in tapping more markets for its merchandise goods over the years, the United States and Japan continue to hold sway over the Philippines' export earnings due to their significant contributions, said the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

Acting NEDA Director General Augusto Santos said less-than-brisk exports for next year were considered in the setting of the 2008 economic growth target of between 6.3 and 7 percent, which is conservative compared with the projected growth of at least 7 percent this year.

"Weakened external demand, aggravated by the cooling US economy and the slow recovery of

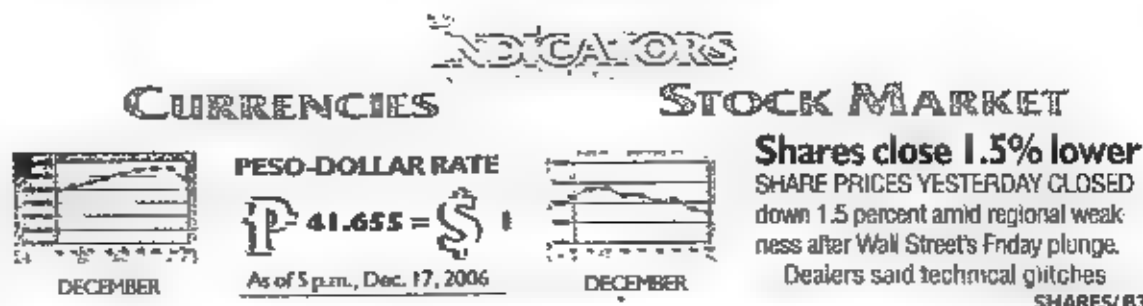
Japan, may pose downside risks," Santos said yesterday during the NEDA's yearend economic briefing.

The slowdown in the US economy was partly brought on by the subprime market crisis in that country, where financial institutions were discouraged from lending to high-risk borrowers. The subprime market, where loan defaults are recorded, is composed of credit-risky borrowers of housing loans.

The United States and Japan each account for a double-digit contribution to the Philippines' export earnings. Latest data from the National Statistics Office showed that, of the country's \$4.65-billion export earnings in October, the United States accounted for 17.7 percent, or \$820.62 million. Japan accounted for close to 14 percent, at \$649.65 million.

Santos also said exports growth would likely fall below the official target of 11 percent for this year.

GOV'T/BS



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RP firm files P100-M lawsuit vs Microsoft

By Daxim L. Lucas

US-BASED MICROSOFT CORP and its local unit were slapped with a P100-million civil case yesterday by Southeastern College Inc. after the technology giant allegedly "pirated" a software manual written by the local educational establishment.

The case marks an unusual reversal of roles for Microsoft, which has aggressively pursued and prosecuted local business establishments found using illegally copied versions of its popular Windows operating systems and Microsoft Office applications.

"Microsoft, [which] vigorously goes after [copyright] infringers of its products, has violated the intellectual property right of one of our locals," said Atty. Estelito P. Mendoza who represents the complainant.

The damage suit stems from Microsoft's alleged unauthorized and illegal digital copying and distribution of a 379-page manual on the use of the "Microsoft Office" application.

Dubbed "Innovate: A Mentor's Guide to ICT Foundation Competencies," the manual's copyright is owned by Southeastern College and is lodged with the National Library with registration number A-2005-

799 and assigned the ISBN (international standard numbering system) number 971-9272-12 by the National Library's bibliographic services division.

According to the complaint filed with the Makati Regional Trial Court, the manual was authored by Southeastern College school director Conrad M. Manalac. It was developed in 1999 for the exclusive use of the school's teachers and students, as part of its information and communications technology (ICT) education program.

In 2004, Microsoft launched "Partners in Learning" (PIL), a global ICT education program meant to deliver technology skills training to students and teachers, and to assist in ICT integration in curricula and learning.

"Microsoft decided to use Southeastern College's Microsoft Office Manual to train its target participants in the use of Microsoft Office applications," the school said in a statement.

"Microsoft purchased printing licenses to print 10,000 copies of 'The SEC Microsoft Office XP Manual' from Southeastern College," it added. "The 10,000 printed or book form copies, retitled 'Innovate: A Mentor's Guide to ICT Founda-

RP FRUM/BS

Microsoft, [which] vigorously goes after [copyright] infringers of its products, has violated the intellectual property right of one of our locals," said Atty. Estelito P. Mendoza who represents the complainant.

5287-0666

GO

Breaktime

From page B2
of his vehicle during a downpour to rescue a Red Cross staff whose vehicle skidded off the road on a trip from Quezon province."

The citation would have also referred to the election of Gordon to the governing board of the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

It was a first for a Filipino.

Shares ...

From page B1

halted trading twice and exacerbated the sell-off, while bullish government economic growth projections failed to lift sentiment.

The composite index lost 51.87 points to 3,486.82. The broader all share index was down 29.97 points or 14 percent at 2,146.44.

Decliners outnumbered gainers 100 to 26, while 34 stocks were unchanged.

Turnover was 1.2 billion shares worth P2.5 billion (\$60.7 million).

"It's the spectre of a US recession that kept investors out of the market," said Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities. **AFP**

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HONDA

B People, Events & Products

Illam posts best finish in 35 years

THE INTERNATIONAL LITTLE League Association of Manila, or Illam, outdid itself last season, having had its best ever finish in its 35-year history.

Three teams, the Illam Major Girls, Junior Boys and Philippine Big Girls, swept the regionals and went on to represent not just the Philippines but the entire Asia-Pacific region at the World Series in the United States. While all three teams did their country proud, the Illam Junior Boys ex-

celled and swept the International Division before narrowly losing to Hawaii in the World Series finals.

This unprecedented success would not have been possible without the great dedication of the players and their coaches and managers, the heartfelt support of the many families involved and, of course, the unstinting support of Illam's corporate sponsors.

The Big League Girls were backed by First Philippine Hold-

ings, Enervon C/Unilab, PCSO, Meralco, Tadeco, PJI Group of Companies, Insular Life, OOCL and Directory Philippines Corp.

The Junior Boys, meanwhile, were supported by the Presidential Management Staff/Office of the President, Pet One and Suy Sing.

The Major Girls drew strength from Stradcom, Del Monte, ABS-CBN Foundation, Ayala Land, ATR Kim Eng, Jollibee, China Airlines, Tyke Rack Inc, Doris Ho and Suy Sing.



JOEY PEPPERONI OPENS AT ROBINSONS PLACE MANILA

Joey Pepperoni specializes in contemporary Italian cuisine with a fittingly delectable twist. Its signature dishes are made of the freshest ingredients and are thoroughly prepared to suit even the most discriminating palate. Very reasonably priced, and yet offering a winning fusion of tasteful variety, excellent service and a hearty dining experience, Joey Pepperoni has rapidly become a

hit among working urbanites, families and students alike. Seen at the grand opening of Joey Pepperoni at Robinsons Place Manila is Boy II Quizon, who led the opening ceremonies. Joey Pepperoni's core team was also present as it inaugurated the first mall-based outlet. Joey Pepperoni is located at Level 4, Robinsons Place Manila. For inquiries, call 383-6737.

Exatech opens new showroom at TriNoma

EXATECH INC, PHILIPPINE DISTRIBUTOR of world-class Whirlpool, GlemGas, and Fujidenzo home and commercial appliances, recently announced the opening of its newest showroom at the TriNoma mall named "Kitchen Excellence by Exatech".

TriNoma, short for Triangle North Mall, is located at EDSA corner North Avenue in Quezon City.

According to Exatech Inc marketing manager Joy Catitis, "We're excited about the opening of Kitchen Excellence by Exatech, which is a great

destination for your kitchen needs. With the opening of this showroom, our products will be available and accessible to more customers in Quezon City."

"So for those who are planning to do a makeover of their kitchens or simply planning to purchase a brand new home or commercial appliance, the Exatech showroom at TriNoma is the best place to visit. Customers can expect the best possible deals, prices, and excellent customer service at the showroom," Catitis said.

Located at the ground floor of Tri-

Noma, the Exatech showroom features some of the newest and latest kitchen products, such as refrigerators and freezers, cooking ranges, microwave ovens, and other cooking equip-

ment. Also available are washing machines, dryers, and split-type air-conditioners, among other appliances.

All products bear the world-renowned Whirlpool, GlemGas, and Fujidenzo brand names.

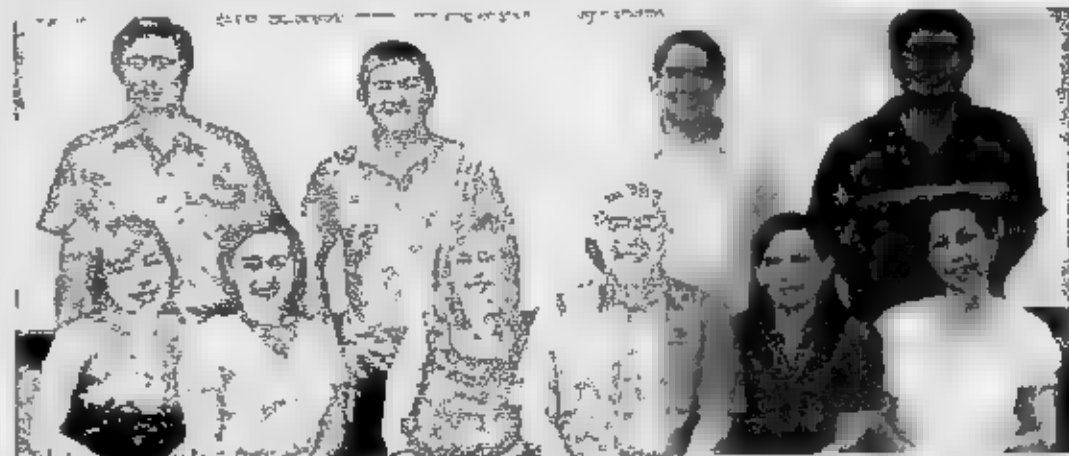
A trusted global brand, Whirlpool is a leading manufacturer of major home appliances. Whirlpool products are known for their innovative features, state-of-the-art technology, efficiency, durability, and design.

A name trusted by culinary professionals, GlemGas from Italy is reputed for its highly efficient cooking appliances, which are exported to Europe, Australia, United States, and Asia.

Fujidenzo is a premiere name in affordable, high-quality home and commercial appliances manufactured using Japanese technology.

Products at the Exatech showroom are available through cash or card purchases. According to Exatech, customers can look forward to promos, premium items and discounts for every purchase.

For more information on the Exatech showroom at TriNoma, customers can call 712-0535.



CARTRIDGE WORLD ISLANDS' ANNUAL STRATEGIC PLANNING

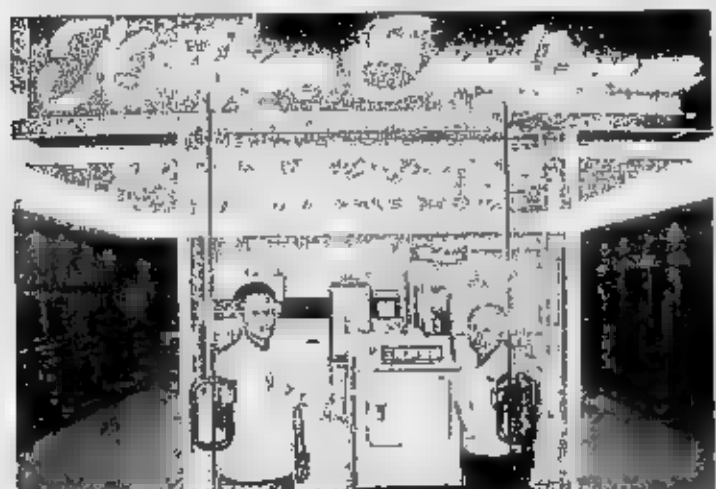
Cartridge World Islands Philippines Inc held its annual strategic planning session on Nov. 24 at KFC Jupiter Branch. In attendance were all its Philippine franchisees (back row, from left) Ced Ramirez, (Pasong Tamo), Ken Chung (Gar-net), JC Mercado (Laguna), Cocoy Mercado

(Shaw). Front row, from left: Caz Ramirez, Gene Chung, Babylyn and Bruce Newfield, Meroy Villanueva (Sucat), and Bim Mercado. For franchising inquiries, call Bruce Newfield at 893-7012 or log on to www.cartridge-world.com.ph.

Pacific Internet launches Fourth Quarter Blast

PACIFIC INTERNET, THE LARGEST TELCO-independent Internet Communications Service Provider by geographic reach in the Asia Pacific region, has just launched its yearend promo-Fourth Quarter Blast. The Fourth Quarter Blast is a rewards program targeting all new customers of Pacific Internet Philippines for wired and wireless leased lines of 256kbps and above, Optimax variants, and other products bundled with leased lines such as Sentinel and Coloc. This promotion is

ongoing until Jan. 31, 2008. Various exciting premium items such as a Digicams, WiFi switches, laptops, Cisco routers, Jollibee gift certificates and free one-month subscriptions await new customers when they subscribe to regular or premium plans of Pacific Internet for the above services. New Pacific Internet customers will receive the premium items within two weeks after payment of the initial fees for their subscriptions and the submission of corresponding forms.



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Dec. 18 - 6 CYCLE MIND

Dec. 19 - KAMIKAZEE

Dec. 20 - PAROKYA NI EDGAR

Dec. 21 - SPONGE COLA

Dec. 22 - SANDWICH AND IMAGO

Dec. 18 - 22 : **ILAW NG PASKO**

(LANTERN FLOAT PARADE)

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(CHILDREN'S CHOIR CONTEST)

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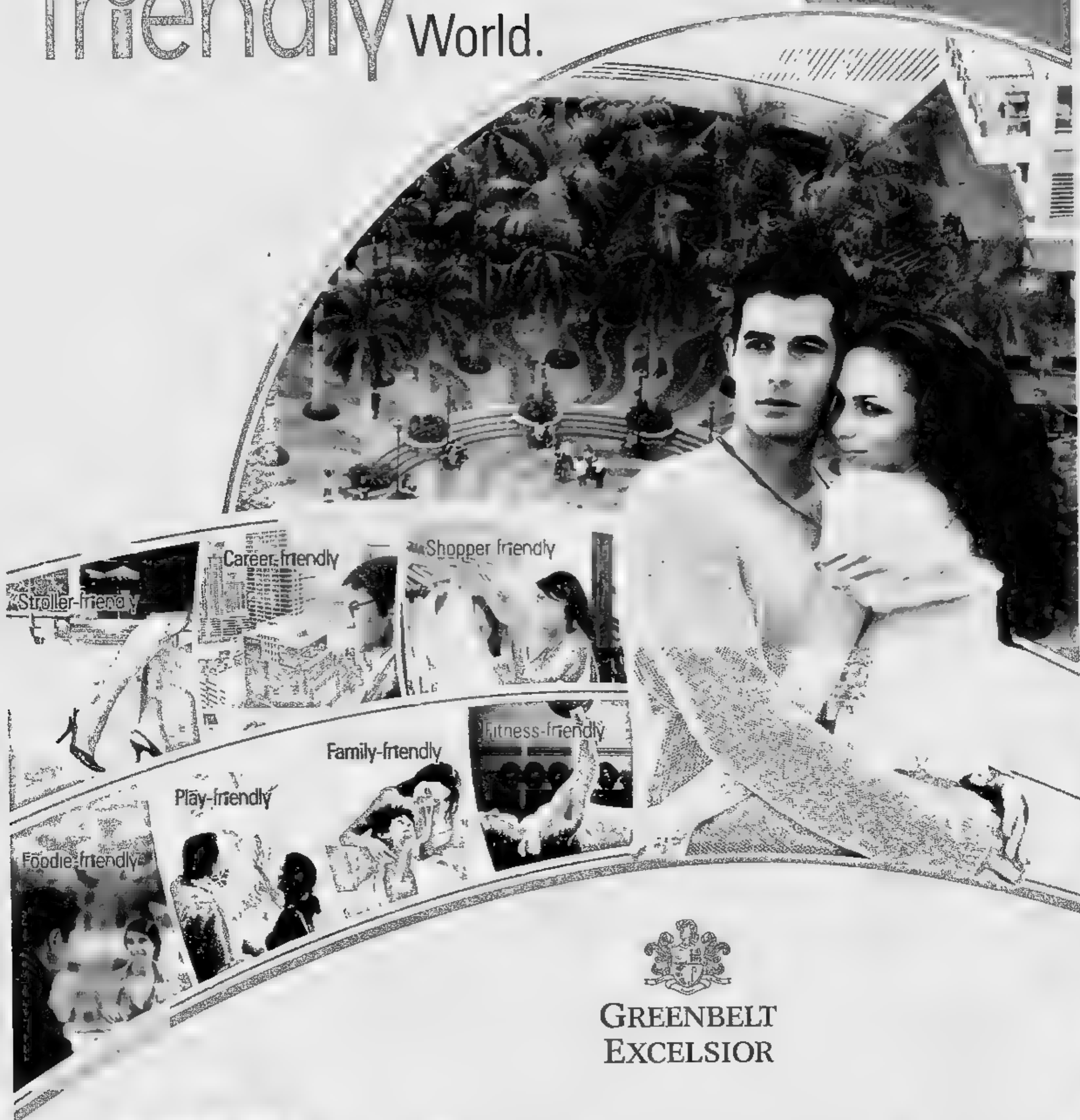
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MAY ILIBUGA

PANDAY
T5
HABANG TUNATAGAL
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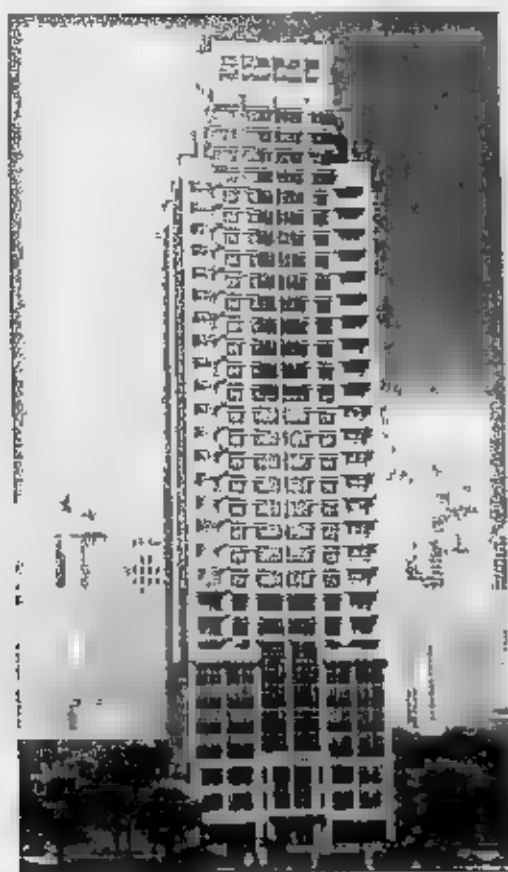
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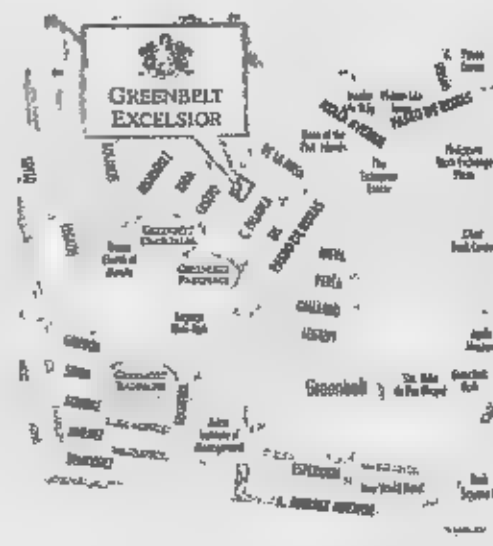


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To have to hold
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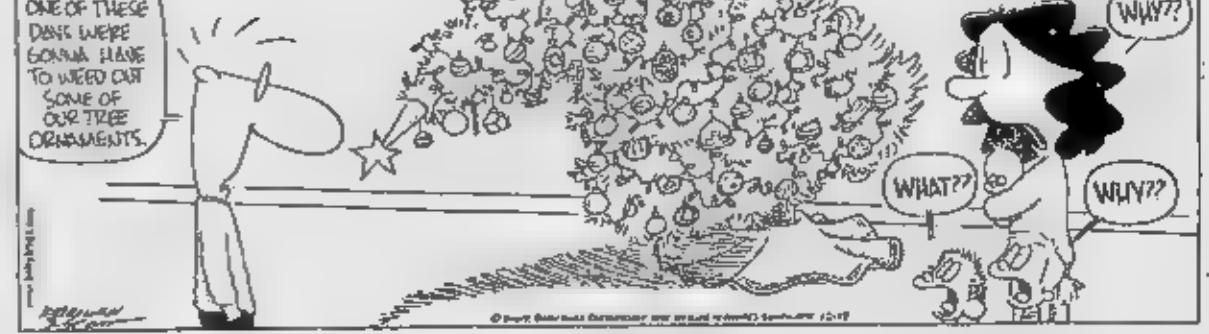
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GARFIELD



BABY BLUES



ATOMO AND WEBOY



LOVEKNOTS



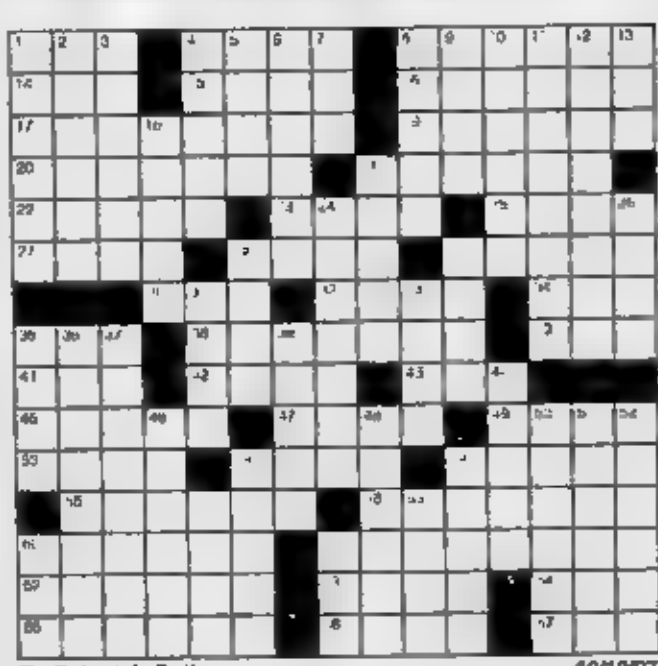
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DAILY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- 1 Twitch
 - 4 Male sibs
 - 8 Lacanian city
 - 14 In the past
 - 15 Volcanic flow
 - 16 Director Ron
 - 17 Band member off the wagon?
 - 19 Visions
 - 20 Japanese warrior
 - 21 Magnate's purview
 - 22 Amalgamate
 - 23 Wood and anil
 - 25 Statuesque
 - 27 Fill completely
 - 28 Romantic title
 - 29 Computer code
 - 30 Homer's exclamation
 - 32 Streamlet
 - 34 Compass dir.
 - 35 Besmirch
 - 38 Bad toupee bargain for narcotics?
 - 40 Comic Skelton
 - 41 Greek letter
 - 42 Mild Dutch cheese
 - 43 Training room
 - 45 Large fishing hooks
 - 47 French seas
 - 49 Formerly, formerly
 - 53 Courtier tenor
 - 54 Nota (note well)
 - 55 Avar
 - 58 Stacks off
 - 59 More austere
 - 60 Lack of vigor
 - 61 Card game for strippers?
 - 62 Some Dutch genre paintings
 - 63 Landed
 - 64 J. Lynga's rock group
 - 65 Really working
 - 66 Sicilian volcano
 - 67 German article
- DOWN
- 1 Birthplace of St. Paul
 - 2 Tropical lizard
 - 3 Choose a slide
 - 4 Trumpet blast
 - 5 Indian prince
 - 6 Humpty-Dumpty's kin
 - 7 Patriotic men's org.
 - 8 Wedges
 - 9 Stately display
 - 10 Walches for
 - 11 Heckle a driver?
 - 12 Edge of the tundra
 - 13 Circulars
 - 18 Toned down
 - 21 Ghostly
 - 24 Some railroad employees
 - 28 Told a whopper
 - 29 Heavy sound
 - 28 Accomplice
 - 31 Raw minerals
 - 33 Falls behind
 - 35 Bucks' leader?
 - 36 Loser to Hippomenes
 - 37 Heyerdahl's favorite potato?
 - 39 Competitive activities
 - 44 D.C. subway
 - 48 Frothed
 - 48 Season again
 - 50 Positioned in order
 - 51 Co-founder of "The Teller"
 - 52 Intense fear
 - 54 Monster
 - 55 Nasal pertitions
 - 57 Turner or Louise
 - 59 Romulus or Remus
 - 60 Gray shade
 - 61 "Norma ..."

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: Once you have a big idea, you never let it go. You're amazingly persistent and resilient. That's why you're not afraid to tackle big projects. You have vision. Because of this, others sometimes think you're in your own world. (And perhaps you are.) You have high ideals and a wonderful imagination. Work hard to build or construct something important this year.

Birthdate of: Brad Pitt, actor; Katie Holmes, actress; Steven Spielberg, director.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Today lucky Jupiter begins to move slowly across the top of your chart for the rest of the year. This brings you wonderful career opportunities and good fortune in general. Lucky you!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): In the year ahead, travel and education opportunities will come your way. Many will make great strides in publishing, the media, medicine and the law. Work-related travel is also likely.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Inheritances, gifts and goodies can come your way this year. Somehow you'll definitely benefit from the wealth of others (for the entire year!).

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Partnerships and close relationships will become joyful and mutually rewarding. Enjoy your friends and partners in this coming year. It's easier to be happy now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your job is going to improve so much in the next 12 months, it's laughable. Your evil boss will move or get fired. If your job doesn't improve, you'll get a better one.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Plan for a vacation in the next 12 months. Some of you expand your families. Love, romance, sports and fun times are yours for the coming year. Whoopie!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): The next 12-18 months are excellent for real estate deals. Now is the time to improve or expand your home. Family relations will be happy and joyful as well.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your entire outlook on life is becoming happier and more optimistic. This upbeat attitude will continue for the next year. Wonderful!

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): You'll definitely earn more money in the next 12-18 months. You can boost your earnings as well as come up with wonderful money-making ideas. Ka-ching!

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Today, for the first time in 12 years, lucky Jupiter moves into your sign, where it will stay for a year. This brings you all kinds of opportunities and good fortune. Yeahaw! (It's your lucky year ahead.)

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): In the coming year important events will take place that deepen and enrich your inner world. You'll understand life better. You'll learn to be more compassionate.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): What a popular year ahead! Friends, groups, clubs and organizations all want to see your face. New friends definitely will come into your life.

CONCEPT'S SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku By Dave Green

					1				
					1	8	9	4	
						7			5 3
	5				3	1		9	
	9	1	2		4	8	7		
	4		5	9				1	
2	8				1				
		9	7	5	6				
		4							

Difficulty Level ★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9

Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

6	1	5	3	4	2	7	9
8	7	2	6	9	1	5	3
3	4	9	7	5	2	1	6
5	9	8	2	3	4	6	1
1	6	7	5	8	9	3	4
2	3	4	1	7	6	8	9
7	5	1	4	2	3	9	8
4	8	6	9	1	5	7	2
9	2	3	8	6	7	4	5

Difficulty Level ★

ENTERTAINMENT

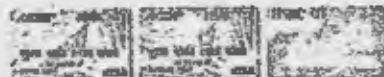
Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL 2007



(INQUIRER Entertainment is running this MMFF guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema tour. The festival runs from Dec. 25 to Jan. 7, 2008.)

Resiklo

Stars Bong Revilla, Dingdong Dantes, Jennylyn Mercado, Paolo Contis, Benjie Paras, TJ Trinidad, Rol Vinzon, Jolo Revilla, Bryan Ravilla, Michelle Madrigal, Jalrus Aquino, Ella Cruz, Bobby Andrews

Directed by Mark Reyes

In 2021, a resistance group of humans, led by former military officer Crisval (Revilla), defends a "recycled" sanctuary called *Paraiso* against aliens. Director Reyes says that "40 percent of the film is CGI (computer-generated imagery)." He asserts that he came up with the concept for this sci-fi flick "long before there was news about 'Transformers.'" Dave Hukom of Ignite insists that "the movie's robots are products of Pinoy ingenuity and resilience." Reyes recalls: "I made a 10-minute pitch tape and, after Sen. Bong saw it, he wanted to do it immediately." Says Hukom: "There are definitely more effects than 'Exodus' (Revilla's last MMFF movie)."

'Katas' gets an 'A' rating

By Marinel R. Cruz

MAVERICK FILMS' "KATAS NG SAUDI," about the plight of Filipino contract workers abroad, has received an "A" rating from the Cinema Evaluation Board for the "very effective," "exceptional" and "realistic" direction by filmmaker Joey Reyes.

"Katas" is one of nine entries to the 2007 Metro Manila Film Festival, which starts Dec. 25. An "A" means a 100 percent tax rebate.

"The film ... is a realistic portrayal of Filipino familial relationship," said CEB chair Christine Dayrit, quoting critics. "Joey's direction is exceptional, nothing out of sync."

The CEB board commended lead actor Jing-goy Estrada, saying he is "at his best" in this film. Lorna Rolentino, as the wife, gave an "admirably sensitive" performance.

Tax exemption

A board member said the script is a "revealing slice of life told with simplicity and truth" and that the dialogues are "insightful, sensitive, touching and realistic."

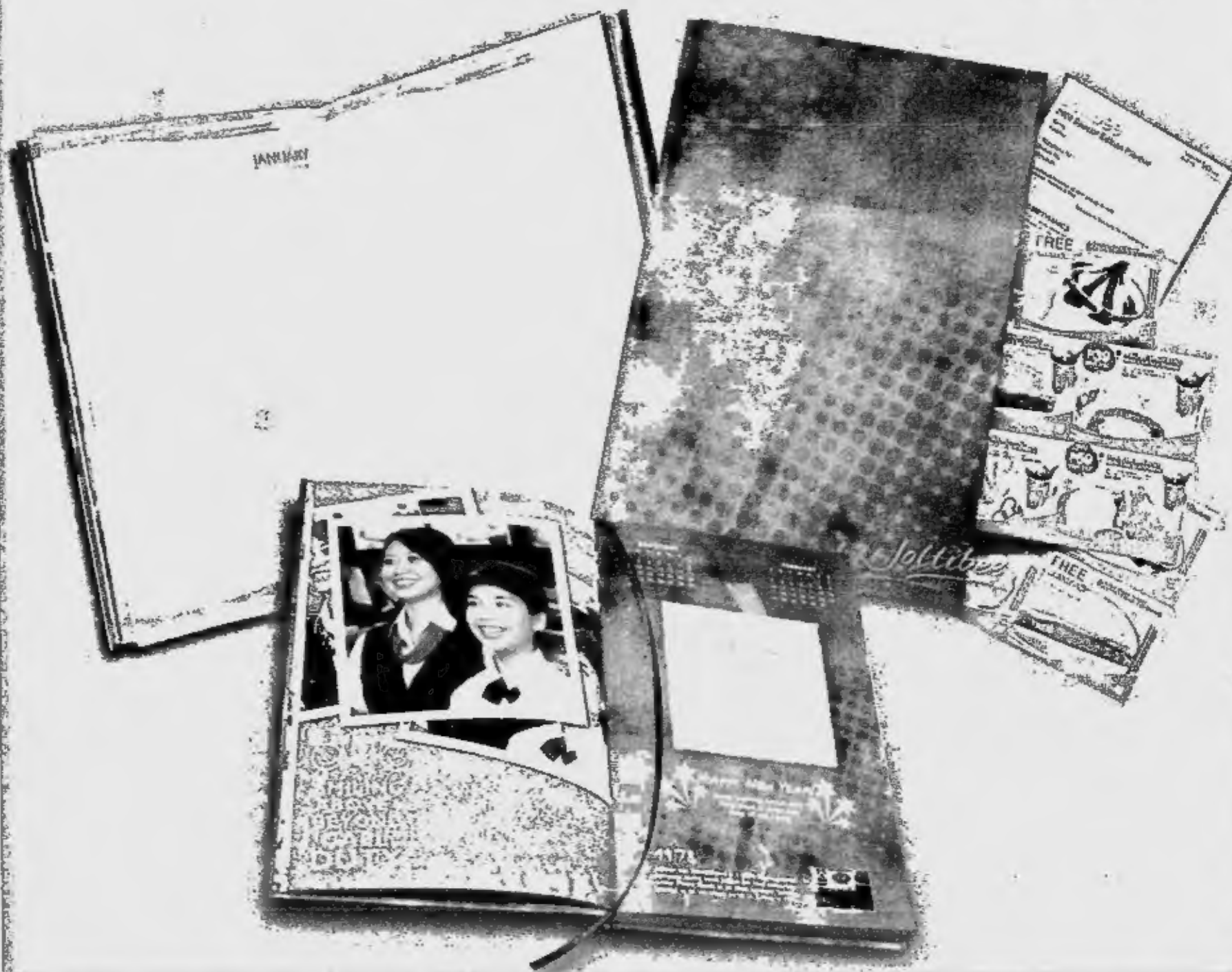
For a film to receive tax exemption, the producer submits an application addressed to the CEB chair and pays P20,000 for theater rental (plus P5,000 for a movie in digital format, with which to rent a digital projector).

The board members (a minimum of 11) vote by secret balloting on whether the movie should be tax-exempt.

"If the members decide to grant tax exemption, it would then deliberate on whether the film merits an 'A' or a 'B,'" explained Dayrit. "We have a formula for this: If a movie has competent effort in all criteria, it warrants a 'B.' Add to this originality in approach, and the film gets an 'A.'"

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Promo Period: December 13, 2007-January 21, 2008.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5248, Series of 2007.

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MMTA

METRO MANILA
THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
On New Cinema - Theatres
Cineplex Cinemas
1000 North Avenue, Suite 1000
Manila, Philippines 1000

1. ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
4. ENCHANTED: THE KINGDOM

PREMIERE
GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF

Marasana Cinema
(Paseo) tel 833-3210 / 833-3214

1. THE KINGDOM
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. HOOD OF HORROR

Center Mall Cinema
Buenos Aires Mall, Magway Avenue
(Buenos Aires) tel 874-4443-4444

1. HITMAN
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Jade Cinema
(Alegre City) tel 845-887-8881 to 83

1. THE KINGDOM
2. BOOGEYMAN
3. THE KINGDOM
4. FRED CLAU

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Bulacan, Batangas) tel 847-337-7007

1. BEOWULF
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel 728-1156

1. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. HOOD OF HORROR
4. THE KINGDOM

metropolis star
www.clicktheatre.com.ph
(Mandaluyong) tel 804-8888, 803-8888

1. HOOD OF HORROR
2. BATANES
3. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4. THE KINGDOM

THEATRES
All Theatres: 1000 North Avenue, Suite 1000
Manila, Philippines 1000

1. ENCHANTED
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. HITMAN

PACIFIC MALL CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Cinema
(Paseo) tel 833-3210 / 833-3214

1. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2. BATANES

Filinvest
(Mandaluyong) tel 833-3210 / 833-3214

1. BEOWULF
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
4. ENCHANTED
5. CATACOMBS
6. ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE
7. THE KINGDOM
8. RESERVED
9. ONE MORE CHANCE
10. PASUKOB

Blue Wave
Sambag Highway cor. Naga Rd. Pasig City tel 534-0352

1. HOOD OF HORROR
2. BATANES
3. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4. THE KINGDOM

Liapas Cinema
(Bulacan) tel 858-1274

1. HOOD OF HORROR
2. BATANES
3. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4. THE KINGDOM

Liapas MovieCity
(Bulacan) tel 858-1274

1. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2. BATANES
3. THE KINGDOM
4. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Super Cinerama
Cineplex Cinemas
(Bulacan) tel 833-3210 / 833-3214

1. RESERVED
2. RESERVED
3. RESERVED
4. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
5. HOOD OF HORROR

Harvest
(Mandaluyong) tel 533-3853 / 533-3855

1. BATANES
2. HOOD OF HORROR
3. BATANES
4. RESERVED

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA

1. HITMAN - THX
1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30

2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3. BEOWULF
12:40 3:00

4. ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

5. CATACOMBS
1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50

6. GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

7. ENCHANTED
12:50 3:00 5:10 7:20 9:30

8. indieSine: 3 DAYS OF DARKNESS
12:40 2:45 4:50 6:55 9:00

9. BATANES
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

10. HOOD OF HORROR
1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

ERMITA

1. GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
1:00 3:20 5:35 7:50 10:00

2. indieSine: 3 DAYS OF DARKNESS
12:50 2:40 4:30 6:20 8:10 10:00

3. BEOWULF
12:00 2:10 4:20

4. HITMAN
6:35 8:20 10:00

5. PASUKOB
12:30 2:20 4:10 6:00 7:50 9:40

6. CATACOMBS
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

7. ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

8. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
11:35 1:40 3:45 5:50 7:55 10:00

Are you Prepared to EXPERIENCE the

3 days of darkness
talong araw ng kabitman

exclusive at
Robinsons Movieworld indieSine
GALLERIA - ERMITA - BACOLOD
DECEMBER 12 to 24, 2007

MTRCB Rating: R18

METROEAST

1. EASTERN PROMISES
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

2. ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE
11:05 1:30 3:55 6:25 9:00

3. GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

4. BATANES
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

5. HOOD OF HORROR
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

6. ENCHANTED
12:30 2:30

7. BEOWULF
4:35 6:45 9:00

8. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
10:45 1:20 3:55 6:30 9:05

9. CATACOMBS
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES

1. PASUKOB
2. BATANES

3. HOOD OF HORROR
4. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

PIONEER

1. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2. ELIZABETH: GOLDEN AGE

3. CATACOMBS
4. GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF

STA. ROSA

1. HITMAN
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. GAME PLAN
4. BATANES

1. GAME PLAN
2. BOOGEYMAN 2
3. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
4. HITMAN

DASMARINAS

1. HOOD OF HORROR
2. GHOST SON
3. BATANES
4. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

1. HOOD OF HORROR
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. GHOST SON
4. BATANES

ANGELES

1. THE KINGDOM
2. FRED CLAU
3. WE OWN THE NIGHT
4. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

1. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2. LIONS FOR LAMBS
3. ENCHANTED

TARLAC

1. THE KINGDOM
2. FRED CLAU
3. WE OWN THE NIGHT
4. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

1. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
2. LIONS FOR LAMBS
3. ENCHANTED

STARMILLS

1. FRED CLAU
2. BATANES
3. WE OWN THE NIGHT

4. BOOGEYMAN 2
5. THE KINGDOM
6. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

BACOLOD

1. HITMAN
2. THE KINGDOM
3. indieSine: 3 DAYS OF DARKNESS
4. MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
5. LUST CAUTION
6. THE GOLDEN COMPASS

1. HITMAN
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. BOOGEYMAN 2
4. GAME PLAN
5. MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
6. FRED CLAU

LOILO

1. HITMAN
2. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
3. BOOGEYMAN 2
4. GAME PLAN
5. MR. MAGORIUM'S WONDER EMPORIUM
6. FRED CLAU

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TUESDAY,
DECEMBER 18, 2007

POWER PLANT GINEMA

ROCKWELL CENTER, MAKATI TEL: 898-1440/41

1. THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13
2:20, 4:50, 7:20, 9:50

2. ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE PG13
1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30

3. THE GOLDEN COMPASS PG13
12:20, 2:50, 5:20, 7:50, 10:20

4. THE KINGDOM R13
12:30, 2:55, 5:20, 7:45, 10:10

5. DEATH PROOF R13
1:30, 3:40, 5:50, 8:00

6. ELIZABETH THE GOLDEN AGE PG13
12:30, 3:00, 5:30, 8:00, 10:30

MOVIES & SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHANG CINEPLEX

1. ELIZABETH MTRCB PG-13
1:00, 3:30, 6:00, 8:30

2. ELIZABETH MTRCB PG-13
12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00

3. GOLDEN COMPASS MTRCB PG-13
1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

4. THE KINGDOM MTRCB GP 2:00, 9:30

5. DEATH PROOF MTRCB R-13
4:40, 7:05

6. ENCHANTED MTRCB R-13
2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30

MOVIES and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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1. CATACOMBS
11:00, 1:20, 3:40
6:00, 8:20, 10:35
R-13

2. THE KINGDOM
11:00, 1:20, 3:40
6:00, 8:20, 10:35
R-13

PROMENADE

a destination for all
NOW SHOWING

3. DEATHPROOF
11:50, 2:05, 4:20
6:35, 8:50
R-13

4. THE GOLDEN COMPASS
11:15, 2:00, 4:40
7:20, 10:00
PG-13

5. ELIZABETH
11:15, 2:10, 5:00
7:50, 10:35
PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722-4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

December 15, 2007 The Company 8:30 PM
December 19, 2007 Pina Colada, Dulce, Mula Barry 8:30 PM
December 26, 2007 Pina Colada, Dulce, Mula Barry 8:00 PM

PROMENADE GREENHILLS

December 20, 2007 Jed Madala 8:00 PM
December 26 & 29, 2007 Drag-Ons 10:00 PM

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OPENS TOMORROW

A science-fiction writer is about to get the biggest inspiration of his life... from a kid not of this world.

martian child

Based on the Hugo Award & Nebula Award-winning short story by renowned sci-fi luminary David Gerrold.

john cusack
amanda peet
and bobby coleman

DJ Mo denies KBP suspension

DJ MO NIXES RUMORS THAT the KBP (Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas) will suspend him because of his daring interview with Sen. Chiz Escudero. "From what I know, it's not true," he clarifies. "Chiz on my radio show was a very positive guesting. It gave the listeners an open forum that made them learn more about their elected senator. Anyone who thinks I should be suspended for that

needs to either listen to a tape of the show or they should get a bit more open-minded about media affairs. I'm sure a hypocrite started the chismis."

With all the controversies DJ Mo has gotten thrust into, he has now perfected his sense of RUMOR.

After 'Marimar'

A STUDIO insider told me that Marian Rivera's next project after

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal



"Marimar," which ends in mid March, will most likely be "Ros-alinda" or "Darna" and not "Dye-sebel." The Kapuso network's newest superstar ought to be called "Merry Mar(ian)."

No big deal

LUCY Torres-Gomez says that she and Richard are not big on giving each other Christmas gifts. "We constantly surprise each other all

year round," she beams. "So we don't have to wait for Christmas to exchange presents."

But for her birthday (Dec. 11), Goma gave her three books—on grilled cheeses, about paninis and a Mac Book Pro. "That's because I am into sandwiches now and I love using our press grill," she explains. "I use my Mac to keep files so that my life is organized (laughs)." That's one charmed life Lucy's got!

Homemade gifts

IF there's one celebrity whom Dingdong Dantes wants to give a Christmas gift to, it's Sharon Cuneta. "Lately Sha has been so kind to me," he says. "So I want to make her try the pizza I make and

the beer I brew myself."

Isn't it amazing that someone as busy as Dong still finds time for homemade stuff? Fame has not made him lose sight of the simple joys in life. That's what sets Dong apart from the rest.

Yuletide babies

ABS-CBN Star Magic really knows how to pamper their wards. They threw a party cum press con for their December "babes": Yeng Constantino, Jake Cuenca, Rico Barrera, Bruce Quebral, Aaron Junatas, Kristel Fulgar, Dionne Monsanto, Jessy Mendiola, Mila dela Cruz, Lal Villaruz, Jo-

hanna Villeta, Puma de Borja, Yong An Chiu, Carlos Agassi, Juiljo Pilit, Joshua Dionisio, Michelle Murene and Tim Espinosa. Among all of them, Jake's star shines the brightest but with all the projects lined up for the rest, they will surely make their mark soon. Speaking of Jake, he adamantly denies that he has split up with Roxanne Guinoo due to her unreasonable jealousy attacks. Guess he still 'Jakes' her day in spite of all the rumors hounding them.

E-mail: wateringholeshangt-la@yahoo.com

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For inquiries, call: **687-6963**
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ENCHANTED 2:35, 6:15, 7:55, 10:35 G	THE GOLDEN COMPASS 2:40, 5:20, 8:00, 10:35 PG-13	ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE 2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30 PG-13	THE KINGDOM 3:20, 8:05 R-13	GRINDHOUSE: DEATH PROOF 5:40, 10:30 R-13
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The National Commission for Culture and the Arts
in cooperation with

Embajada de Mexico Manila, Filipinas and Mowelfund Film Institute

Invites Filmmakers to join a 4-day

MEXICAN FILM WORKSHOP
(December 18-21, 2007)
with **Gustavo Loza**
(Director, *Al otro lado / The Other Side*)

Deadline for submission of application form/CV and interview is on Dec. 10, 2007.
Limited Participation:
Open to Filmmakers who have done two or more films

Mowelfund Plaza
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For inquiry, call 727 1915 loc. 122 and look for Gre

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AT THE CINEMAS				
Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS 683 or SURESEATS 64 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations. Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777				
GLORIETTA 1	1 CATACOMB	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 HITMAN
GLORIETTA 4	1 ENCHANTED	2 THE KINGDOM	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	GUARANTEED SEATS
	4 GONE BABY GONE	5 BATANES	6 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	7 DEATH PROOF
GREENBELT 1	1 PAPER DOLLS	2 THE GOLDEN COMPASS		
GREENBELT 3	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE		
	3 DEATH PROOF	4 GONE BABY GONE	5 EASTERN PROMISES	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN COMPASS		
	3 DEATH PROOF	4 CATACOMB	5 THE KINGDOM	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 THE GAME PLAN	3 FRED CLAU	4 EASTERN PROMISES
MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	2 DEATH PROOF		
	3 HOOD OF HORROR	4 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	5 CATACOMB	
TRINOMA	1 BATANES	2 DEATH PROOF	3 ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE	4 HOOD OF HORROR
	5 ENCHANTED	6 CATACOMB	7 THE GOLDEN COMPASS	

AT THE MALLS	
CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS: Glorietta - 752 7272 Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54 Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1890 Ayala Center Cebu - (832) 231 5342 loc. 324 Market! Market! - 886 7519 TriNoma - 901 3000	
glorietta	Urban Beats featuring Stonefree and Cambio December 17; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park
GREENBELT	Holiday Opera Concert December 21; 7pm; Greenbelt 3 Park
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Christian Bautista Live! December 22; 6pm; Town Plaza
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Christmas Chorus featuring Akafelis December 22; 7pm; Activity Center
MARKET! MARKET!	Christmas Shoes: A Christmas Musicales December 17; 7pm; Activity Center
Onstage!	Repertory Philippines presents TUESDAYS WITH MORRIE January 11 to 27, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
Ayala MUSEUM	WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
Tri Noma	Taylor Hicks Live! December 20; 7pm; Activity Center FREE Christmas Gift Bag for every P500 worth of purchase. See leaflets for details. Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-938, Series of 2007 December 1 to 31

The Embassy of Israel Manila in cooperation with Ayala Malls presents

paperDOLLS
A Documentary film by Tomer Heymann

This film showing is dedicated in memory of Sally Camatoy, one of the main leads, who was found dead on the streets of Dubai. Portion of the proceeds will go to Sally Camatoy family.

DECEMBER 12-18, 2007
GREENBELT 1 CINEMA

For screening schedules, please call: 729-7777
MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)

Taylor Hicks Live

GLORIETTA
December 18, 2007
Glorietta 4 Park
7:00pm
Concert hotline: 752.7272

GREENBELT
December 19, 2007
Greenbelt 3 Park
8:00pm
Concert hotline: 757.4853

TriNoma
December 20, 2007
Activity Center
7:00pm
Concert hotline: 901.3000

Meet & Greet after each show